

MAKING A GOSPEL IMPACT THROUGH
A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
ON THE ECONOMY OF NORTHERN GREECE

A THESIS

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all the hard working men and women of Katerini and Thessaloniki, Greece, that the Interbalkan Institute is called to assist in Christ's name with his love and servant spirit. May the marketplace be transformed!!

ABSTRACT

The central issue of this thesis-project is how The Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development, a non-governmental organization that offers business education opportunities to businesspeople in northern Greece, can impact an economic structure that lacks a sound ethical basis of operation. The NGO applies principles consistent with biblical values in its seminars conducted by American businessmen committed to the Christian faith.

This thesis-project examines the biblical basis of the operation of such an NGO as expressed in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission given by Jesus and how these set the stage for the involvement of Christian businesspeople in the marketplace in order to expand the Kingdom of God in the northern Greece business sector. Recognizing that understanding context is crucial for the American businesspeople who will lead seminars in Greece, the thesis-project examines some of the cultural, political, religious, national, and economic distinctives between Greece and the United States of America.

Finally, the thesis-project seeks to raise the awareness of committed Greek Christian businesspeople as well as the larger northern Greece business community of the need to follow biblical principles in business through the Institute's business education projects and through on-going discussions. The projected outcomes of the thesis-project will be evaluated by the business community, the project participants, and the instructors.

CHAPTER 1

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

The need is acute for businessmen and women in Greece to learn to operate from a strong ethical foundation based on biblical principles. These principles relating to the marketplace need to be taught and modeled in such a way that business people both individually and corporately will live by them. Greeks who are true believers and not just nominal Christians need to understand that God holds them accountable not just for spirituality displayed in religious settings, but also for the totality of their lives and behavior--including their business and finances. Greeks who are just nominal Christians need to see the practicality of the Christian faith when it is adopted on a personal level through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

That faith, then, when practiced corporately can lead to community transformation; the economy can become a servant-tool in the development of an improved standard of living. Stan Guthrie, associate news editor of *Christianity Today*, put it succinctly: "Faith in Christ is often just the first step in a process of transformation --spiritual, personal, and social. It's no accident that people rightly related to God vertically often improve their relationships with others horizontally. Evangelism and social uplift go hand in hand."¹ Faith in action in a society is proof that the relationship with Christ is a dynamic process that makes the difference in an individual's life.

¹ Stan Guthrie, "Bill Cosby Was (Mostly) Right," *Christianity Today*, July 2004, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/julyweb-only/7-26-32.0.html>.

The Nature of the Problem

Midway through the first decade of the 21st century, Greece faces a myriad of economic problems. In spite of the infusion of billions of Euros since the country joined the European Union (EU) in 1982, Greece has not been able to make the changes necessary to develop its economy. Layers of bureaucracy and antiquated laws discourage new ideas, an entrepreneurial spirit, and the development of new job sectors needed to absorb workers and unemployed professionals. The problem is compounded by corruption, tax evasion, and misappropriation of funds from the European Union.

In a 2005 newspaper article, Greece's Minister of Development Dimitris Sioufas said that Greece's "economy is plagued by bureaucracy, complicated laws, absence of conditions for competition in specific markets, lack of infrastructure, the absence of the connection of the educational system to the process of productivity and the job market, the low percentages of investment for research, the limited development of new technology, insufficient empowerment of new initiatives, and the difficulty of attracting venture capital."²

In addition, in 2006 Greece's para-economy--transactions that are illegal and therefore not taxed--accounted for 28.6 percent of the Gross National product or 69 billion Euros, according to the newspaper *Kathimerini*.³ Greeks have a long-standing distrust of their political leaders and government, and the leaders have a long-standing distrust of the people. According to Minister of the Interior Prokopis Pavlopoulos, one

² D. Evaggelodemos, "Greece: An International Center of Commerce," *To Bήμα*, July 24, 2005, http://tovima.dolnet.gr/print_article.php?e=B&f=14522&m=D03&aa=1.

³ Leonidas Stergiou, "Στα 69 δισ. η παραοικονομία στην Ελλάδα σύμφωνα με την Παγκόσμια Τράπεζα" [At 69 Billion Euros, the Illegal Economy in Greece, according to the World Bank] September 28, 2006, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_economy_1_28/09/2006_199307.

market analysis showed that a mere 8 percent of the citizens trust their government.⁴ The upshot of all this is that the government levies taxes on the people and businesses with the premise that they will evade paying the taxes, and the citizens cheat on their taxes because they feel the government will somehow get the money they are owed anyway.

Also, the infusion of EU Euros has been accompanied by widespread fraud and corruption in all areas of public life. Reports show that more than 90 percent of what are called "small scale incidents of corruption" are never prosecuted. For example, most accused public employees are reinstated in their positions without any punitive action having been taken.⁵ Even Christian businesspeople have not been exempt from the taint of corruption. For example, a common notion among many believers with whom the author of this study has talked is that businesspeople cannot survive unless they play by the "rules" of the existing system and occasionally cheat. There are documented examples of both believers and non-believers who are business owners and who do not provide pension funds for their employees, as the law requires, because the government charges up to 87 percent of the daily wage of each worker for insurance on the premise that it cannot collect the funds from households.⁶

Since 1982, the EU has awarded Greece three economic packages worth about 20 billion Euros each. According to the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini*, a fourth

⁴ Mr. Pavlopoulos, interviewed by Mr. Papanikolaou, Electronic Press Office, Ministry of the Interior, http://www.ypes.gr/ypes_po/detail.asp?docid=1271.

⁵ Christos Zervas, "Ρεκór διαφθοράς και ατιμωρησίας" [Record Corruption and Non-Punishment] *ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤΥΠΙΑ*, April 4, 2005, 1.

⁶ Thanos Tsiros, "Η ΕΚΤΕΤΑΜΕΝΗ ΦΟΡΟΔΙΑΦΥΓΗ ΕΧΕΙ ΔΗΜΙΟΥΡΓΗΣΕΙ ΠΟΛΛΕΣ ΣΤΡΕΒΛΩΣΕΙΣ ΣΤΟ ΦΟΡΟΛΟΓΙΚΟ ΣΥΣΤΗΜΑ" [Extended Tax Evasion Has Created Contortions in the Tax System] *ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤΥΠΙΑ*, September 24, 2006, 7.

package has been granted for 2007-2013 to the tune of 24.4 billion Euros.⁷ While the Greek populace has long suspected massive corruption exists in the use of EU-generated funds, only since 2003 has hard evidence surfaced.

Recently, judicial system scandals regarding illegal business, kickbacks, and even collusion with state church officials on shady transactions in real estate have come to light. Examples reported in the newspapers include the following: (1) In 2004, the country's Auditing Council conducted 200 precautionary inspections of contracts for public works and determined that 34 were illegal. In addition, 14 of 90 contracts for supplies were illegal. Only a small percentage of the cases were prosecuted to the full extent of the law.⁸ (2) In 2005, several justices were implicated in deals with church officials concerning favoritism in real estate dealings and interference in court proceedings regarding specific individuals under investigation who sought assistance from the church in order to receive favorable rulings.⁹ (3) In 2005, a member of the Greek parliament, Mr. G. Dragasakis from the Leftist “Coalition” (ΣΥΝΑΣΠΙΣΜΟΣ), made public and proved to be true an accusation that certain bishops encourage parishes to keep two sets of books and endorse tax evasion in order to avoid contributing the 35 percent of the incoming funds to clergy salary, as the law requires.¹⁰

⁷ Evgenia Tzorgi, “Το Δ΄ Κοινοτικό Πλαίσιο Στήριξης στην υπηρεσία των στόχων της Λισσαβώνας” [The 4th Community Economic Support Package in the Service of the Lisbon Objectives] *Καθημερινή*, October 19, 2006, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_economyepix_970839_19/10/2006_201906.

⁸ Christos Zervas.

⁹ Daniel Howden, “Bribery Scandal Engulfs Greek Church,” *The Independent*, February 4, 2005, <http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/article13541.ece>.

¹⁰ “Tax Evasion by Churches,” *Καθημερινή*, March 29, 2005, Editorial, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_747003_29/03/2005_138692.

Scams have surfaced linking government officials and private companies in the misuse of EU funds earmarked for use in building roads, hospitals, and infrastructure. For example, the new general hospital building in the province of Pieria was assigned to a construction company in January 1997 and was scheduled to open in February 2000, but as of December 2006 was still on hold after the project changed hands because of mismanagement by the previous construction company.¹¹ Funds have run out from a previous EU package and there is a rush to assign funds for its completion from the next EU package.

Joint funds from the EU and the national budget have been used on things such as hiring and transferring unqualified civil service employees (for example, transferring a porter to the position of tax revenue inspector)¹² and using money around election time to raise the pensions of farmers in order to insure the re-election of the ruling governmental party.¹³ In the end, most of the funds earmarked by the EU to enhance economic development and provide jobs especially in new sectors such as high technology and the service industry did not find their target and great opportunities were lost.

Also, the long-standing lack of communication between the economic and academic sectors of the country has resulted in a ready supply of trained personnel but few opportunities for employment. According to the EU educational service *Eurydice*,

¹¹ Minutes of the Greek Parliament, Session 128, March 2, 2001, www.parliament.gr/ergasies/showfile.asp?file=Es010302.txt - 215k -.

¹² Prokopis Hatzinikolaou, “40.000 δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι θέλουν να γίνουν εφοριακοί!” [40,000 Public Employees Want to Become Tax People] *Καθημερινή*, October 15, 2006, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_economy_815654_15/10/2006_201540.

¹³ “Ο πρωθυπουργός ανέλαβε το πολιτικό κόστος τερματισμού της προεκλογικής παροχολογίας” [The Prime Minister Assumed the Political Cost of Ending Pre-election Fringe Benefits] *Καθημερινή*, October 8, 2006, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_100019_08/10/2006_200737.

Greece has the highest percentage of young people enrolled in higher education of all twenty-five member states. But the report also states that after students graduate, they find it difficult to find employment since most available jobs are in fields in which Greek universities do not focus.¹⁴ The obvious result is that many university graduates have prepared for jobs that do not exist. It also means that the educational system still functions with an industrial-era mindset and has not adapted to the technology-information era.

The Setting

Greece is located in the Balkan peninsula which also includes Albania, Bulgaria, and the states carved from the former Yugoslavia: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia, Montenegro, as well as Romania, and the European part of Turkey.¹⁵ The Balkan region of Southeastern Europe has been a very complex part of the world and has exerted great influence in the history of Greece. Of that influence, William Hagen, Professor of History at the University of California, Davis, writes:

As the Ottoman Empire began to break down in the eighteenth century, the ideology of European nationalism penetrated the Balkans in support of the Balkan Christians' claim to liberation from increasingly oppressive Turkish rule. Eager for territorial gains or Balkan Christian clients, some European great powers, notably Russia, became patrons of this process. Others, such as Great Britain, lost faith in the ability of the "sick man of Europe" to go on living and resigned themselves to the empire's partition. Thus the foundations of independent national states were laid in Serbia in 1815, in Greece in 1830, in Romania in 1856, in

¹⁴Apostolos Lakasas, "Αιμορραγεί το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα" [The Educational System is Bleeding] *Καθημερινή*, December 17, 2005, 5.

¹⁵ World Atlas, <http://worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/balkans.htm>.

Bulgaria in 1878, and in Albania in 1913. In each case, the liberated state territory contained various minorities besides the new ruling nationality.

The new states were all also mere fragments of the ideal territorial nations in the minds of the new nationalist elites. These ideal nations-- Greater Serbia, Greater Albania, Greater Greece, and the like -- encompassed outlying regions populated by still more national minorities and coveted as well by one or more neighbouring states. In other words, the Balkan states were all born in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as irredentist nations--that is, as nations committed to the recovery of their “unredeemed” national territories. Their legitimacy rested entirely on their ability to embody the national “imagined community.”¹⁶

Although memories of the Ottoman oppression still influence the Greek mindset and affect the cultural, economic, and political behaviour of the Greek state, a moderating effect began when Greece joined western international communities such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952 and the European Union in 1982. Many of the early nationalistic expansionism ideas gradually were abandoned in return for guarantees from those international bodies for secure and stable borders with the neighbouring states, guarantees that Greece has not always trusted. Still today, remnants of behaviour and attitudes of the Ottoman era coupled with lack of trust in the Great Powers of Western Europe and America have resulted in Greece and its state leadership being in constant tension with the West.

In 2001, at the time of the most recent census, the population of Greece was 10.94 million.¹⁷ The predominant religion is Eastern Orthodoxy as expressed in the Orthodox Church of Greece, the official state Church. Ninety-eight percent of the population is

¹⁶ William W. Hagen, “The Balkans’ Lethal Nationalisms,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4 (1999): 53.

¹⁷ National Statistical Service of Greece, http://www.kethi.gr/greek/statistika/Apasxolisi/APOGRAFI_01.htm.

Greek Orthodox, 1.3 percent is Muslim, and 0.7 percent is other.¹⁸ Only 0.02 percent of Greeks are evangelicals. Proselytism is prohibited by law and can result in imprisonment and fines due to a law that rarely is enforced but still exists in the constitution.¹⁹

***The Interbalkan Institute for Educational and
Economic Development as One Possible Piece of the Solution***

A partial solution to the growing economic scandals in Greece may be the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with strong ethical foundations rooted in biblical principles. These NGOs can focus on teaching committed businesspeople how to live lives worthy of Christ as citizens who obey the law but who also have the responsibility to challenge the system when it asks them to violate biblical principles. Although Greece is steeped in Christian history and is so very connected with the early church--including the New Testament originally have been written in Greek--Greeks generally are not knowledgeable of the scriptures and their application to daily life. Some of the reasons will be examined later in this thesis-project. Thus, the people must be introduced to the scriptures in general and to how scripture relates to their business affairs in particular. Christian-based NGOs can be instrumental both in teaching those biblical principles and in training business people how to function in the current marketplace utilizing those principles.

The Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development (hereafter called the Interbalkan Institute or the Institute) headquartered in Katerini in Northern Greece is one such NGO. Its mission is to create educational, economic, reconciliatory,

¹⁸ Demographics of Greece, <http://www.answers.com/topic/demographics-of-greece>.

¹⁹ Greek Constitution: Section 4 of Greek Law No. 1363/38, as amended by Law No. 1672/39, http://www.religioustolerance.org/rt_greec.htm.

and cultural forums and networks that will affect positively the standard of living in the Balkan region in a holistic way. The Institute serves as a catalyst for educational and economic development by bringing together appropriate needs and resources²⁰ (For further explanation, see appendix 1).

This is no easy task in a country where the fusion of nationality and religious affiliation along with a very long and proud history creates a subconscious filter that examines and evaluates all new ideas, especially those from the West, with suspicion and some degree of xenophobia. And while most Greeks have a respect for the Church's historical significance, religion is merely one component of life, with holidays and Holy Days just a few more things to add to one's social calendar. Most Greeks just do not see religion or the scriptures as relevant to everyday life. Another challenge is how to introduce free enterprise and the effective use of capital in a national economy that has been overly dependent on the government and in a society where, after 20 years of continuous socialist rule, capitalism continues almost always to carry a strong negative connotation.

Purpose of the Thesis-Project

The purpose of this thesis-project is to illustrate how the Interbalkan Institute can effectively convey biblical principles that relate to the marketplace environment and can lead people engaged in business to learn, examine, and interact with the truth of the gospel and its application to everyday life. The primary goal is to examine how through the business seminars it offers the Interbalkan Institute attempts to integrate biblical

²⁰ Promotional brochure of the Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development, June 2004.

principles in the business communities of Northern Greece resulting in business leaders adopting and incorporating these principles in their personal and corporate lives.

Methodology Used in the Thesis-Project

This study will use the historical method for a brief description of Greece especially after her return to democracy in 1974 and her induction into the European Union. The historical method also will be used to describe the current climate in which Greek businesses function and the problem of lack of sound business education training based on biblical principles.

Using the theological method, this study will set out the biblical framework for starting a Christian-based NGO such as the Institute. This method also will be used to support the concept of using the Institute to comply with the Great Commission and the Great Commandment given by Jesus in order to impact the business environment in northern Greece with the gospel.

The cross-cultural analysis method will be used to examine certain attitudes in Greece and in the United States that describe the historical, cultural, political, economic, and religious contexts of those two countries. This information will be used to help American business people who come as instructors in the Institute to understand the Greek business environment. The presence of NGOs and their constituency in the marketplace will be examined. Attention will be given as to how business needs a strong foundation of biblical principles and how Christian-based NGOs can promote these principles.

Finally, in the design, implementation, and outcomes of the business education project of the Institute, which is the thesis-project, evaluative research methodology will

be employed to examine the local marketplace context, select seminars to be offered, evaluate follow-up to the seminars, and determine if the seminars met the Institute's objectives and goals.

Desired Outcomes of the Thesis-Project

A major intent of this thesis-project is to evaluate the impact on committed Christian businesspeople and on the larger Katerini business community of the Institute's business education projects designed to raise awareness of the need to follow biblical principles in business.

Other desired outcomes are as follows: (1) to enlist businesspeople in life-long learning and to involve them in on-going discussion groups that will focus on applying biblical values, both personally and corporately, in the marketplace; and (2) to foster a change of attitude about business dealings in the Greek business community (such as improvement in the quality of products and service).

Limitations of the Thesis-Project

Limitations of this thesis-project are these:

1. Non governmental organizations such as the Interbalkan Institute are a relatively new concept in Greece, since until the last five to ten years, almost all services have been provided by a very centralized government. People in both the public and the private sectors, therefore, are unfamiliar with the scope, function, networking, and benefits of NGOs. This slows the progress of the Institute and measurable results will require much longer than the time limitations of this thesis-project. The results and

conclusions presented in this thesis will, of necessity, be derived only from the first two years of the functioning of the Institute.

2. Building trust over a brief two-year period between the Interbalkan Institute and the business community is another limitation. Two years is an all-too-brief time not only to overcome the Greek business community's lack of familiarity with such an organization but also to overcome mistrust created by institutions that were set up to train businesspeople in how to acquire funds from the EU, but did not deliver the promised skills and withheld inappropriate fees from those funds.

Definition of Terms

Balkans

The Balkans includes Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, the European part of Turkey, and the states carved from the former Yugoslavia: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia, and Montenegro.

Greece

Situated in the most southeastern part of Europe, with its islands extending from the northern Aegean Sea to the northern part of the Libyan Sea off the coast of Africa and below the western part of Turkey, Greece is the connecting point of three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Greek Orthodox Church

According to the official online library of the Church of Greece,

The Church of Greece, with a membership of approximately nine million people, was officially recognized as a self-governing church in 1850. She increased both territorially and numerically after a series of revolutionary wars that brought to the Greek nation the territories of Epiros, Thessaly, Macedonia, Thrace and the Ionian and Aegean islands. Greece is a solidly Orthodox Christian country. The Church is indeed "the soul of Greece," as an American author recently observed.

The Church of Greece is divided into 66 small dioceses, with 7,765 parishes, more or less, whose vitality in the post-World War II period was notable in religious education, social consciousness, and theological scholarship. The catechetical, or Sunday schools are a source of pride in Greece for both clergymen and laymen. The religious revivals initiated by such movements as Zoë, the Orthodox Christian Unions, Apostolike Diakonia, and Soter, to mention only the most important of them, gave new life to the Church of Greece.²¹

In this thesis-project, the term "Greek Orthodox Church" will be used interchangeably with "Church" and "Greek Church."

Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development

The Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development is a catalytic non-governmental, non-profit organization that seeks to bring together needs of the Balkans area with appropriate resources available internationally in order to facilitate long -term solutions in the areas of economics and education, making the solutions applicable on a personal level. The Interbalkan Institute is involved in a broad range of educational (including cultural) and economic endeavors²² (For a copy of the mission, purpose, goals, values and objectives of the Institute, see appendix 1). In this thesis-

²¹ Demetrios Constantelos, "The Historical Development of Greek Orthodoxy," *Understanding the Greek Orthodox Church* (Boston: Hellenic College Press), 1990, <http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/constantelos.html>.

²² See appendix 1.

project, the terms “Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development,” “Interbalkan Institute,” and “Institute” are used interchangeably.

Marketplace Ministry

“Marketplace ministry is the passion that starts when God connects your job, business, ministry, and life purpose into one package.”²³

Non-governmental Organization (NGO)

“NGOs are usually understood to be the group of organizations engaged in development and poverty reduction work at local, national, and global levels around the world. The profile of NGOs has increased steadily among development policy makers, activists and researchers in both the rich industrialized countries of the 'North' and among the low-income, aid recipient countries of the 'South'. NGOs now feature prominently in efforts to secure social and economic change”²⁴

Nonprofit Organization

“A not-for-profit organization is a private corporation, self-governed by volunteers that must invest any “profits” in the service of the public it has been “approved” to serve. Many people use the term “nonprofit” when discussing these organizations. Others call them “voluntary,” “social sector,” “social-service sector,” “independent,” “charitable,” even “third” sector (the other two sectors being “for-profit”

²³ Website: <http://www.releasing-kings.com/>.

²⁴ David Lewis, *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=107509139>.

and “public”). In many countries, we hear the term “nongovernmental, public-purpose organization” (NGO) used widely.”²⁵

Summary

In today’s global market, running a business effectively anywhere in the world is becoming increasingly pressure-filled. Especially is that true in Greece for Christian businesspeople who desire to uphold biblical principles. In Greece, where business takes place in an environment of mistrust between the government and the private sector, sound business education training based on biblical principles is a necessary tool. When proper biblical foundations are laid, then sound businesses will not only be able to survive but grow and succeed in today’s fast changing market. Also, applied faith will make Christianity relevant to the lives of individuals.

Thus, the purpose of the Institute’s project of seminars for businesspeople in Katerini and Thessaloniki is both to introduce the practical aspect of Christianity to the business community as well as to impact personally those who seek to know more how faith in Christ will help them live an integrated life. To achieve that purpose, experienced American businessmen and businesswomen with a commitment to Jesus Christ will be recruited as volunteer instructors. The intended outcomes are as follows: to conduct a successful cycle of pilot seminars followed by an ongoing program of business education seminars throughout the local business community and to develop a Bible discussion

²⁵ Howard H. Brown, and Donald L. Ruhl, *Breakthrough Management for Not-For-Profit Organizations: Beyond Survival in the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 6, <http://www.questionia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=106815663>.

group with seminar attendees who are interested in learning more about how faith is connected to daily life.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

The Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development operates out of a biblical framework that serves as a guide for its purpose and function (For the mission statement of the Institute, see appendix 1). This chapter will examine some basic tenets that form that framework, namely beliefs concerning the nature of God, and the relationship of man and his world. Implications will be drawn as to how these affect the work of the Institute.

The Nature of God

Scripture describes God as the creator, redeemer, and sustainer of all creation. Several characteristics of God relate to the creation order and consequently affect the staff, volunteers, and other leaders associated with the Institute as they function in the context of the local business community.

Self-existence

God has the “ground of His existence in Himself.”¹ He alone is God; there are no lesser gods. He is the only Deity; all others are counterfeit. God created the world

¹ L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 58.

from nothing and nothing existed before God.² Theologian John Stott writes: “the Bible begins with the universe, not with the planet earth; then with the earth, not with Palestine; then with Adam the father of the human race, not with Abraham the father of the chosen race. Since, then, God is the creator of the universe, the earth and all mankind, we must never demote him to the status of a tribal deity.... No, there is only one living and true God, who has revealed himself fully and finally in his only Son Jesus Christ.”³

Implication

All leaders of the Institute must understand that they can depend on God, who himself does not rely on anything or anyone in the universe. Nothing, therefore, can alter his relationship to his creatures and nothing can alter the principles by which he guides the universe. Whatever he claims to be his will, therefore, cannot nor will be overturned or cancelled by any other being.

Immutability

God is “devoid of all change, not only in his Being, but also in his perfections, and his purposes and promises.”⁴ God describes Himself to Moses as the “I am,” as always in the present with no past or future.⁵ His character is reflected in a continuous unchanging present. God and his character never change although everything in the creation order is subject to change [Heb 1:11-12; Ps 102: 25-27].

² John 5:26; Ps 115:3; Rom 11:33-34

³ John Stott, “The Living God is a Missionary God,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 4.

⁴ Berkhof, 58.

⁵ Ex 3:14; Is 41:4

Implication

There is no greater encouragement than to know that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that he is perfectly reliable. He is the only one who can guide an individual or an institution in today's fast-changing world. His consistent counsel, eternal principles, and enduring Truth are totally reliable. He works in the midst of today's unpredictable emerging global economy, using the same principles and promises as he did in the times recorded in scripture. Leaders of the Institute find this surety to be a great source of strength.

Intellect

God has the all-encompassing knowledge of everything and everyone [1 Sam 2:3; Ps 94:9; 1 Sam 16:7; Mt 11:21]. God is the one who “applies His knowledge to the attainment of His ends in a way which glorifies Him most.”⁶ It is his wisdom [Rom 11:33; Ps 19:1-7; Ps 33:10]. He is the creator of knowledge. He intends for each part of creation to relate to the whole, so that it all is interrelated. It is he who establishes networks among people and organizations to do his work. He connects individuals and groups and brings together the resources needed to accomplish the things that are Kingdom-enhancing and that make him known to the world.

One example in scripture is that of Nehemiah when he set out to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem: he recognized God's hand behind the provisions for the project [Neh 2:7-9]. Scripture records how God moved the hearts of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia, to allow the Jews to return to their homeland and how these two unbelieving kings even financed the journey. Scripture further records how God raised Ezra to be a leader and

⁶ Berkhof, 69.

how he not only took on the task of collecting materials for rebuilding the temple but also set up the empire's justice system that taught God's law under royal decree.⁷ God knew what was needed then, and he knows what is needed today.

Implication

The Institute seeks to train business people to think and act in ways that reflect the wisdom of God through their dealings in the marketplace. Since these ways of thinking and behaving are reflections of God's wisdom, they are not meant for believers only, but for all people, including businesspeople in northern Greece.

Creator of the Material World

For the believer, the creation of wealth should be viewed in the light of God as the creator of the material world. Brian Griffiths, former head of policy development under Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and current deputy chairman of Goldman Sachs International and a member of the British House of Lords, says that "God is outside of his creation, but it still depends on his active involvement for its continuation and survival.... God was involved in caring for his creation; the lilies were clothed, the ravens fed and the sparrows watched over. The Christian view of the physical world is important in thinking about the creation of wealth; for the physical world is literally the raw material to which value is added in order that wealth may be created. The two crucial facts about this world are that it is God's and that it is intrinsically good."⁸ Furthermore,

⁷ Ezra 1:1-4; 7:27-28

⁸ Brian Griffiths, *The Creation of Wealth: A Christian's Case for Capitalism* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1985), 49-50.

Griffiths defines the act of wealth creation as “anything which transforms the material world so that it can be of greater use to fellow human beings.”⁹

God designed the world so that people, created in his image, can create and add value by their stewardship. Creation in itself is good.¹⁰ God’s people are to recognize that goodness. They are to value material goods and services and act ethically in all their business dealings--from how they obtain wealth to what they do with the profits of wealth. God holds them accountable for that profit and expects them to use it in ways that follow his principles and extend his kingdom (cf).¹¹ The acquisition of wealth is not wrong in itself, rather it is ill motivation and bad management that God despises.

Implication

To most Greeks, the idea that the acquisition and distribution of wealth should rest on a strong spiritual foundation is at best irrelevant. To most Greeks, wealth and spirituality are mutually exclusive. (This will be explored further in chapter 3.) A major objective of the Institute is to teach Greek business people God’s design for the creation and distribution of wealth.

Trinitarian Nature

In response to the question, “Who is God?” Brian Griffiths writes that “the biblical answer to this question, with its emphasis on Theism rather than Deism and on Trinitarianism rather than Unitarianism, has profound implications for economic life.... He is not some mysterious supernatural influence or some impersonal Supreme Being.

⁹ Ibid., 52.

¹⁰ Gen 1: 1-25

¹¹ Mt 25: 14-30

He is God the Father, Christ the Incarnate Son and the living Holy Spirit.”¹² It is the Trinity in whose name the believer is baptized in obedience to a clearly expressed command of Jesus Christ.¹³ He is the personal God who is one-in-three and who is in perfect harmony in being and in activity.

Griffiths links the fact of the personal Trinitarian God with economics thusly:

1. The personal dimension of God affects economic life by adding to it “a personal dimension as well. The act of employment is not just a legal transaction or some input into a production process; it becomes a personal relationship between two human beings and the work situation becomes a network of such relationships.”¹⁴

2. The Triune God values community. Griffiths writes:

Before time there was plurality of persons in the Godhead. God was not alone. He was not some solitary figure, unable to communicate, for whom love was a meaningless idea. The Trinity was a community, a fellowship... It suggests that the idea of community is crucial to the life of society. In the Trinity the one God does not take precedence over the many persons, neither do the many have priority over the One. When in religion the One is given preference, as in Islam, the consequence has been a form of totalitarian state which attempts to discern the will of Allah. When the many are given priority the result is anarchy.¹⁵

According to Griffiths, the lack of balance between the “One” and the many results in the Marxist approach to economics in which the state declares itself an economic savior, or in Libertarianism with its emphasis on the many at the expense of

¹² Griffiths, 53.

¹³ Mt 28:19

¹⁴ Griffiths, 54.

¹⁵ Ibid., 55.

the “One.”¹⁶ In this crisis of economic philosophies, Griffiths maintains “the relevance of the Trinity is to emphasize both the individual and the state, as well as a large variety of mediating institutions which form the basis of a pluralist society. As far as economic life is concerned, these include corporations, partnerships, trade unions, professional associations, committees concerned with setting standards, and so on.”¹⁷

Implication

The work of the Institute must be undertaken with great care. The training offered must center on the needs of the Greek businesspeople who attend the seminars and not on the needs of any one individual who might work with the Institute either in a full-time position or on a short-term project. Local businesspeople must be treated as persons made in God’s image and not as objects of an impersonal task or goal of the Institute.

Further, the Institute’s work will best be done when those who labor therein work cooperatively. It is not an environment for lone rangers.

Perfect Morality

In scripture, according to theologian L. Berkhof, God’s morality is expressed in terms of his goodness towards his creatures [Ps 145:9,15,16; Mt 5:45], his love [John 3:16], love towards his children [Jn 16:27; Rom 5:8], his grace [Ruth 2:2; Eph 1:6-7], and his mercy [Deut 5:10; Ps 57:10; Ez 18:23,32; Lk 1:50]. He also displays his holiness [Job 34:10; Hab 1:13; Acts 3:14; Jn 17:11; 1Pet 1:16], his righteousness [Ezra 9:15; Neh 9:8; Jn 17:25], and his justice [Isa 33:22; James 4:12, Rom 1:32; 1 Thes 1:8].

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Implication

These facets of the morality of God display the balance with which God deals with mankind and the balance that he holds between providing goodness and love for his children and demanding justice and holiness. He expects these precepts to apply to the local business community in Katerini as well as to the Institute's projects and the Institute's leaders.

Sovereignty

God's absolute influence, power, and will extends over creation, including cultures, nations, institutions, governments, business and education sectors, and the marketplace.¹⁸ For God, nothing is an obstacle and he acts according to his pleasure. He has the rulers of this world under his control and his will is powerful.

Implication

The theme scripture verse of the Institute is Jeremiah 32:17: "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for you." This verse serves as a constant reminder that the Institute's work is not a mere human or humanitarian effort but it is God's work. It is he who opens and closes doors; he is the one who will develop training opportunities in places that currently are not open. He will create circumstances that currently do not exist so his glory will be known and shared among the people in the Katerini community. There is no government or institution that can stop him or prevent him from what he wills

¹⁸ Gen 18:14; Ps 135:6; Pro 21:1; Rev 4:11

to do through the Institute. He is the only one who has authority to do his work even in places and situations where Institute leaders cannot gain access by human means.

Man and His Relationship to the World

Man¹⁹ is a steward of the world; and work, when done according to God's will, is anointed by him. Griffiths explains that because God commissioned man to subdue and rule the created order, "man is given authority to control the whole of the created World.... The emphasis here is not on harnessing and controlling the natural world but on preserving and caring for it."²⁰ Man is the caretaker.²¹

Griffith continues:

Man was not created to live in a vacuum; neither was he created for a life of complete leisure, although creation recognizes explicitly the need for rest. The fact that man has a desire as well as a need to work results from his being created in the image of God... It is wrong to think of work as simply being the result of the fall. Nevertheless the fall is important.... All human work--whether physical or mental, skilled or unskilled, creative or routine--takes place in a situation of tension and frustration...but it still remains that it was for work and not for leisure that God created us, for no other reason than that we were thereby to share with him one of his activities.²²

From its inception, Christianity has been a religion that integrates faith into every aspect of life. And according to Max Weber, in his classic work *The Protestant Ethic*,

What was definitely new was the estimation of fulfillment of duty within secular callings as being of the absolute *highest* level possible for moral activity. It was this that led, inevitably, to the idea of *religious* significance of secular everyday labor and gave rise to the concept of calling. So, in the concept of 'calling' is expressed that central dogma of all Protestant denominations which

¹⁹ The term "man" is used in its generic form throughout this thesis-project; it is not used to specify gender.

²⁰ Griffiths, 51.

²¹ Gen 2:15

²² Griffiths, 51-52.

...recognizes, as the *only* means of living a life pleasing to God, not the surpassing of innerworldly [innerweltlich] morality through the pursuit of monastic asceticism, but exclusively the fulfillment of innerworldly duties which arise from the individual's station in life. This then becomes one's 'calling'.²³

This is the very connection between labor and faith that brings wholeness in a person's life and departs from the compartmentalized life of the modern secular man. The Reformers maintained that there is an integration of faith and the life of a Christian that becomes a clear witness of faith in the personal God.

Martin Luther, in the fifteenth century, said it well: "Labor in a secular calling appears as the outward expression of Christian charity."²⁴ Two directives given by Jesus commonly called "The Great Commandment" and "The Great Commission" set the parameters.

The Great Commandment: Living By God's Rules

Jesus gave the Great Commandment in response to a question asked by some religious leaders as to which is the most important commandment to keep: "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."²⁵

²³ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, eds. and trans. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (New York, NY: Penguin Books 2002), 29.

²⁴ Max Weber, quoting Martin Luther in *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, eds. and trans. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (New York, NY: Penguin Books 2002), 29.

²⁵ Mark 12:29-31, New American Standard Version Bible, 1995 edition.

In this commandment, Jesus clearly states that man is a “totality, a complete whole,”²⁶ whose entire being must be centered on his creator if he is to become all that the creator means him to be.

The Holman Bible Dictionary explains it thusly: “The New Testament illustrates four specific and distinct dimensions of human existence, but the writers of the New Testament affirm with the Old Testament writers that a human being is a totality, a complete whole. Quoting [Deuteronomy 6:4](#), Jesus taught that ‘you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength’ ([Mark 12:30](#)). The message is clear: true love of God is love with the total person--heart, soul, mind, and strength.”²⁷

Love God

Jesus says that unadulterated love of the one God is the preeminent ingredient if man is to function as God intended. All the activities of man are to be directed towards loving God.

Love for God cannot originate with man. God loved him first as his creature while he was still a sinner and “we love because he first loved us.”²⁸ God made the first move and exhibited through the highest form of sacrifice the kind of love he has for man.²⁹ The Son exemplified that love when he appeared as man, willingly obeying the Father and thus showing man how he can love God.

²⁶ Holman Bible Dictionary, Mark 12:29-31.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ 1 Jn 4:19

²⁹ Jn 3:16

Love Others

The road to loving others goes through loving self. Businessman Fred Smith, a contributing editor of *Leadership* magazine, explains loving self in practical terms: “Our goal on earth is to grow into the likeness of Christ, the one who gave himself for others. As Robert Browning wrote, ‘Why stay we on earth except to grow?’ And why grow unless it is to serve?”³⁰ Loving self is not self-serving; rather, as Smith says, it requires focusing on developing the self. In fact, he says, “self fulfillment thinks of how something serves me. Self-development thinks of how something helps me to serve others.”³¹ It is only out of this biblical understanding of self-interest that one can love others appropriately.

In the context of the moral dimension of a market economy, Griffiths defines self-interest as “a characteristic of man created in the image of God, possessed of a will and a mind, able to make decisions and accountable for them. It is not a consequence of the fall. Selfishness is the consequence of the fall and it is a distortion of self-interest when the chief end of our lives is not the service of God but the fulfillment of our own ego.”³²

Self-love also is expressed in the effort one puts into growing as a person through association “with people larger than ourselves,”³³ the establishment of a “personal creed”³⁴ by which he will meet life in the marketplace, and by building a “habit of

³⁰ Fred Smith, “Training to Reach the Top,” *Leadership*, April 1, 1996, <http://www.ctlibrary.com/print.html?id=2666>.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Griffiths, 69.

³³ Smith.

³⁴ Ibid.

continual learning,”³⁵ according to Smith. All these directives will assist in maintaining a healthy view of self-love and therefore help one be ready to love others.

There also is a need to identify the “other” who is the object of love. “Who is the neighbor?” the lawyer asked Jesus³⁶ after Jesus instructed him to obey the Great Commandment. Jesus replied with the parable of the Good Samaritan and then turned the lawyer’s question around by asking: “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ *hands*?”³⁷

In his review of Soren Kierkegaard’s book *Works of Love*, Philosophy Professor Stephen Evans of Calvin College, notes that the Danish author makes the distinction between natural love and Christian love like that of the Great Commandment. In fact, writes Evans, “only Christian love is neighbor love, where the neighbor is defined not by a relation to myself, but by a relation to God as the ‘middle term.’ The Christian is not allowed to exclude anyone from the category of ‘neighbor,’ and thus my moral obligations cannot be limited to family, friends, and fellow-citizens. Yet the Christian concept of neighbor is no abstraction; the Christian does not love mankind or some other generality. The neighbor is never hard to find because the neighbor, (in Danish *den Neeste*, literally ‘the next one’) is ‘the first person I see.’”³⁸ It is obvious that Jesus does not allow his followers the choice of easy neighborliness; rather, he commands them to become a neighbor to the ones he brings to their daily path.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Lk 10:29

³⁷ Lk 10:36 (NASB95)

³⁸ Stephen Evans, “Rediscoveries, Books and Culture: A Christian Review,” review of *Works of Love* by Soren Kierkegaard (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1995), July 7, 2000: 154-174, <http://www.ctilibrary.com/print.html?id=282->.

Implications

Several implications emerge for the work of the Institute from this study of the Great Commandment:

1. The obedience of Jesus to the Father provides a model for long-term leaders of the Institute as they attempt to be obedient servants of God. Motivated by Jesus' love they, in turn, can love volunteers who come to the Institute to lead short-term projects as well as those of the local business community who attend the seminars. Displaying this love-motivated obedience is fulfilling the *imago dei* (the image of God) in a fallen world. It is the proof of obedience that Christ is looking for in his followers.³⁹

2. Business people are not just to muddle about in the daily grind; rather, they are to be participants in the creative process and be accountable to God for what they produce, sell, or market. The mandate God gave is operative regardless of whether one realizes it or not. It is neither the profit nor the bottom line but the manner in which profit is made in the context of customer relationships. These principles are basic teachings in seminars offered by the Institute.

3. The Institute must prove its neighborliness by selecting a variety of committed believers as instructors to teach business education. The Institute also must be open to train anyone in the Greek business community who wishes to take advantage of its services and not just a select few.

4. The way Institute leaders, as committed believers in Jesus Christ, model healthy self-love as they train others will be a practical witness of the Christ who lives in them.

³⁹ Jn 14:15, 23

The Great Commission: Extending God's Kingdom

Near the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus gave his last instructions to his disciples. These words, commonly called “The Great Commission,” are “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”⁴⁰

Last words of any teacher to his disciples are very important as they tend to sum up the most vital points necessary to bring to fruition the teacher's mission. These last words of Jesus the Christ not only encompass the focus of the work that he left his disciples to do, but they also describe how they are to go about carrying out his plan.

The Focus of the Commission

The central theme, the main focus, of the Great Commission is disciplemaking. In their book, “Changing the Mind of Missions” James F. Engels and William A. Dyrness explain that one must “notice that in spite of all the missionary sermons we have heard (and most translations), this command is not actually about going somewhere; *it is about making disciples*. Jesus says literally, ‘As you go, make disciples of all nations.’ Or better for a people like us who are always on the go: ‘wherever you go, *do my work* and make disciples of (or in) all the nations.’”⁴¹

In the same book, the authors describe disciplemaking as something that “in a wonderful and mysterious sense, is *an extension of that divine presence*.”⁴² Making

⁴⁰ Mt 28:18-20 (NIV)

⁴¹ James F. Engels and William A. Dyrness, *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 30-31.

disciples is the long-term, continuous process of allowing God to work through a believer to build God's character in the life of another individual.

When one looks at Mark's Gospel and the many instances when Jesus' newly-called disciples were unreliable, it seems reasonable to conclude that Mark "viewed discipleship as a conversion process in and of itself taking place over a lifetime,"⁴³ say Engels and Dyrness.

The Methodology of the Commission

Jesus was very specific with the twelve disciples about what their principle mission was to be after he left them. That mission has applied to all his followers since that time, even to today. In their daily routines, they are to help others become followers of Christ. They are to identify with him through baptism at the beginning of their Christian journey, they are to grow in Christlikeness, and they are to teach and model for others what it means to be a disciple--a Christ follower.

'As-you-go' discipling

The "as-you-go" focus of the Great Commission demands disciples who are aware that the way they live is Exhibit A for validating the gospel message. A Christ-like life may well indeed be the most important methodology for carrying out the Great Commission. The Holy Spirit empowers ongoing life-long transformation in a believer, resulting in a life filled with the fruit of the Spirit--a life attractive to unbelievers.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., 31.

⁴³ Engels and Dyrness, 32.

⁴⁴ Gal 5:22

While these qualities stem from one's decision to follow Christ--to become "a new creature," as the Apostle Paul writes⁴⁵ the transformation is indeed life-long. Of this transformational change, *The Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP 2): The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture* states:

First, our world view (is changed). We are agreed that the heart of every culture is a 'religion' of some kind, even if it is an irreligious religion like Marxism... True conversion to Christ is bound, therefore, to strike at the heart of our cultural inheritance. Jesus Christ insists on dislodging from the center of our world whatever idol previously reigned there, and occupying the throne himself... Secondly, our behavior. The lordship of Jesus challenges our moral standards and whole ethical life style. Strictly speaking, this is not 'repentance' but rather the 'fruit that befits repentance' (Matt 3:8), the change of conduct which issues from a change of outlook.... Thirdly, our relationships. Although the convert should do his utmost to avoid a break with the nation, tribe and family, sometimes painful conflicts arise. It is clear also that conversion involves a transfer from one community to another, that is, from fallen humanity to God's new humanity.⁴⁶

Modeling Christian ethics

The methodology used to fulfil the Commission also includes teaching and modelling biblical ethics. By extension, this includes conducting business in such a way that those listening and watching will be drawn to the Christ behind the ethical principles. In that manner, the Kingdom of God will be extended.

The call for help from business people caught up in the hustle and bustle of the twenty-first century is unprecedented. Business pressure is rising since it is "not only in large corporations that employees are treated as disposable commodities but also in small

⁴⁵ 2 Cor 5:17 (KJV)

⁴⁶The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, "The Lausanne Occasional Paper 2: The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture" in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 495.

companies and nonprofit agencies,”⁴⁷ according to the *National Catholic Reporter*.

Global economy anxiety is spreading in developed and developing nations alike. NGOs have not been left untouched, as Stephen Mugabi, executive secretary of the association of evangelicals in Africa, notes. “Discouraged by the hopeless global realities, many secular and faith based development agencies are actively exploring development approaches and tools so as to address the myriad of issues affecting the lives of people (particularly the poor),”⁴⁸ he says.

The need for spiritual grounding is evident and is being taken seriously in many quarters. “Today the important place of spirituality in human development is being acknowledged. Secular groups involved in development are beginning to take seriously the religions of the communities with whom they work. People are seeking for ethics and morality in development strategies. Therefore, true development, be it Christian or non-Christian, requires addressing the spiritual, because it is not possible to get to the ethical without the spiritual,”⁴⁹ a report on Christian relief and development agencies states. Jesus spoke of similar things in many of his parables: Good Samaritan [Lk 10:30-37], rich fool [Lk 12:16-21], unjust steward [Lk 16:1-8], rich man and Lazarus [Lk 16:19-31], builder of a tower [Lk 14:28-30,33], creditor and debtors, [Lk 7:41-47], and a man taking a far journey [Mk 13:34-37]. To be a model of Christian ethics requires one to possess a servant spirit. Author Gordon MacDonald says “Jesus’ brand of servanthood means that

⁴⁷ Phil Tracy, “Spiritual Side of Work Cries Out for Attention,” *National Catholic Reporter* 42, no. 8 (December 16, 2005), 9a.

⁴⁸ Stephen Mugabi, “Building God’s Kingdom Through Microenterprise Development: A Christian Vision for Transformational Development,” *Transformation* 20, no. 3 (July 2003), 134.

⁴⁹ “Christian Relief and Development Agencies in the Twenty First Century: Consultation Report June 1996,” in *Missions as Transformation*, eds. Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (Carlisle, CA: Regnum Books, 1999), 393.

everyone (child, leper, Gentile, opposite gender, sinner) is more important than me.

Servanthood means that all I have and all I am is placed at your disposal if it will bring you into the presence of God. Servanthood is not about how I add value to my life, but about how I add value to yours.”⁵⁰

Life-style evangelizing

Living out the Great Commission requires a commitment to life-style evangelism. Believers need to become comfortable not only with living their faith in the marketplace, but also with verbally sharing the story of their personal relationship with Jesus Christ with their fellow workers. “Mission is not about Christians being sent into the world as if they were outside of it; they are sent to engage with the many aspects of human existence of which they are already an inextricable part,”⁵¹ an editorial writer for a missions bulletin says.

As Christians move about within the business world their lives become windows through which their colleagues can see Christ. Robert Coleman, professor of discipleship and evangelism at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, plainly states that “disciples do not stop with conversion: they keep following Jesus, ever growing in his likeness, while learning the lifestyle of the Great Commission, and someday, through the process of multiplication, the gospel will reach the ends of the earth.”⁵² The believer’s lifestyle is

⁵⁰ Gordon McDonald, “Building Your Leaders,” *Leadership*, April 1, 2000; [http://www .ctlibrary .com/3186](http://www.ctlibrary.com/3186).

⁵¹ Editorial: “The Gospel in the Midst of Ordinary Life,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 2 (April 2004), 73.

⁵² Robert E. Coleman, “The Jesus Way to Win the World,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29, no. 1 (January 2005), 77.

the salt that makes the person of Jesus living in each believer the magnet that attracts others to him.⁵³

Extending the Kingdom in the marketplace

When Jesus is the magnet, he begins to align his followers' lives like tracings align in the presence of a magnetic field. God, through the presence of Christ living in his disciples in the marketplace, causes changes as the values of the Kingdom of God are brought to bear on the business community. Believers who obey as they move about in the marketplace bring the Kingdom with them.

McFarlane and Siebert suggest that:

We do not view business as a tool *for* missions work. Rather we see the practice of business *in and of itself* (when undertaken according to the Biblical values) as a mission. We also give very high value to the potential for business to contribute to social justice....While we refer to our approach as *business as mission*, it also incorporates most elements of *marketplace ministry*. It emphasizes holism, authenticity, and true globalization. Our understanding of business as mission views business as a primary institution to serve people's various needs in a way that demonstrates the reality of God's love and justice. Evangelism is a critical part of this, but our definition of 'mission' transcends simply preaching the gospel.⁵⁴

God's goodness is far reaching in order that his Kingdom might extend to all parts of the world. One evidence is his common grace. "It is seen in all that God does to restrain the devastating influence and development of sin in the world, and to maintain and enrich and develop the natural life of mankind in general and of those individuals

⁵³ Lk 14:34-35

⁵⁴ Scott McFarlane and Kent W. Siebert, "For the Love of Business: Demonstrating the Love of God Through the Practice of Business," paper submitted to the 20th Annual Christian Business Faculty Association Conference "Just Business: Christian Perspectives on Marketplace Justice," (October 28-30, 2004): 3.

who constitute the human race.”⁵⁵ God allows many of his principles to operate in the midst of a corrupted world in order that they might become fingerprints pointing to him and to his special grace that he showed through his Son. Two results of common grace are the preservation of some sense of morality⁵⁶ and natural blessings,⁵⁷ according to Berkhof.⁵⁸

Philip Yancey writes that according to Isaac Luria, an eighteenth century Hasidic mystic, when the fall happened

a cosmic catastrophe occurred, introducing confusion into creation. Some of the sparks of God’s light returned to their source; what remained within the broken vessels, or ‘husks,’ fell onto every animal, vegetable, and mineral part of the world. The resulting creation, said Luria, now shields God’s holy light, hiding it from view. Or, in another metaphor, creation retains the ‘smell’ of God as a wineskin retains the smell of wine. Skeptical unseeing people can even deny that God exists. Believers have the task of releasing the holy sparks from the husks. We do so through a process of ‘hallowing’ and all of us have a part to play in this process.⁵⁹

Being footsoldiers for Christ

A Christian-based NGO needs the right people to operate and accomplish its objectives. The challenge is to identify the key people whom God already has in place in the system in order to accomplish the work he wants. God’s resources not only come from his body, the church, but from the business world and government.

⁵⁵ Berkhof, 435.

⁵⁶ Acts 17:22

⁵⁷ Gen 17:20; Mt 5:44-45; Acts 14:16-17

⁵⁸ Berkhof, 441-444.

⁵⁹ Philip Yancey, *Rumors of Another World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 51.

At times the most effective thing leaders of an NGO can do is to provide the human factor of volunteers and expertise. And in all things, a servant-of-Christ spirit must prevail. Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church in California--a church that sends thousands of volunteers around the world each year--has said:

Government has agenda-setting ability. They can either make it hard or easy for you. Business has expertise in capital. But these guys will never get the job done by themselves because they lack what the church has! The church has: First, the greatest distribution channel in the world. I could take you to a million villages that don't have a school, a business, a clinic, a fire department, a post office--but they have a church. What if you could network those churches to do not just spiritual care but health care, business development, education? Second the church has a volunteer army of foot soldiers, which neither business, nor government has.⁶⁰

The church is the one entity that consists of followers of the One who was the chief and ultimate volunteer who came to earth to show God's love in action.⁶¹ Jesus' disciples are commanded to follow in his footsteps.⁶² Volunteering as a servant is part of the spiritual DNA Christ has infused in his disciples.

Being the body of Christ

Christian business people who are committed to advancing the Kingdom of God through servant leadership are most effective when working together rather than simply going it alone. This is in keeping with the scriptural analogy of believers as the body of Christ.

⁶⁰ Rick Warren, interview by Jeff Bailey, "A Second Reformation?" *The Cutting Edge*, Autumn 2005, < http://www.vineyardusa.org/upload/fall_2005.pdf>, (December 22, 2005), 40.

⁶¹ Jn 10:17

⁶² 1 Jn 3:16

“The greatest management text ever written was not written by Peter Drucker; it was written by St. Paul,” says Bob Buford of Leadership Network. “In 1 Corinthians 12, he said we're like a body. Can the hand say to the eye, 'I have no need of thee?'” He goes on to say that God has placed each of us exactly where he'd have us in the body. The big issue for lay people, especially the ones we've been discussing, is to find out where they fit, how they're designed.”⁶³

The church must help its members feel they are in a safe environment where they can express fully their giftedness. Buford tells this story to illustrate the point: “Peter Drucker (the management guru) once told me that's why people go to pubs. There, they discover what he calls the ‘third person.’ The first person is the work person--the role you are at work. The second person is the role you are when you walk in your home. The third person is who you are when not confined by those other two roles. Perhaps the church equivalent of a pub is a small group. There, in a group setting, you're able to be that person God designed you to be. You're not circumscribed by your roles as sales vice-president or parent.”⁶⁴ This is especially true for business leaders who feel the heavy weight of responsibility both at work and at home.

It is rare, however, for a church to think in these terms. In a major interview-based research study of the church and its relationship to the business world, authors Laura Nash, senior research fellow at the Harvard Business School, and Scotty McLennan, dean for religious life at Stanford University, found six major points of rift. Kirk Hoiberg, a

⁶³ Bob Buford, in an interview in “Helping the Successful Become Significant,” *Leadership Journal* by editors of the magazine, <<http://www.ctlibrary.com/276>>, January 1, 1996.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

corporate strategy consultant with McKinsey & Company, describes them in his review of the study:

First, the church generally demonizes business and capitalism...If you have ever even heard a sermon on workplace-life--90 percent of churchgoers say they have not--it almost certainly cast business in a negative light.... Second...the church and business have fundamentally different conceptions of the nature of the business person's daily activities...Third, the church generally avoids engaging with specific features of the business world, or it focuses on peripheral features of that world.... Fourth, business people often tune out the church on business matters. Business then poses problems for which business people are theologically and religiously unequipped..... Fifth, the church and business generally use different languages, and each finds the other's language sharply objectionable. The church favors language that is highly rhetorical, abstract, and grounded in intellectual competence and authority. Business people, especially managers, often favor language that is simple, experiential, and grounded in practical results.... Sixth, both sides are trapped in denial about the depth of the estrangement between Sunday and Monday.⁶⁵

Craig Hovey from Fuller Theological Seminary said of the same research survey:

"Both groups tend to dismiss the other: Clergy claim that business is too corrupt and profit driven; business people claim that the clergy are ignorant of economics, overly critical of wealth, and inefficient with church funds. They end up speaking past one another, further entrenching two distant worlds."⁶⁶ Such distance between the church and the business world is tragic. To be most effective, each needs and, indeed must have, the other.

According to Robert Priest, associate professor of mission and intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School:

⁶⁵ Kirk Hoiberg, "Taking Care of Business," a review of *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life* by Scotty McLennan and Laura Nash, *Christianity Today*, <<http://www.ctlibrary.com/12529>>, October 1, 2001.

⁶⁶ Craig Hovey, "Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: the Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life," *Theology Today* 60, no. 30 (2003), 442.

Social scientists have often stressed that relationships and social connectedness are core to the good life in society. Whether within society or on a global scale, such patterns of connectedness (of trust, reciprocity, relational commitment, volunteerism, and philanthropy) constitute a kind of ‘social capital.’... Furthermore, Harvard professor Robert Putnam has famously claimed that half of all social capital in America originates in religious institutions and practices.... Putnam has distinguished between ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ social capital. ‘Bonding capital’ involves the sorts of connections within a social group, while ‘bridging capital’ involves building relationships across social divides.⁶⁷

It seems that the best example of “bonding” and “bridging” capital can be found in the church as a community of faith operating in the marketplace. It is then that the church becomes a “radiant manifestation of the Christian faith and exhibits an attractive lifestyle.... The witness of life of the believing community prepares the way for the gospel,”⁶⁸ says David Bosch, the late professor of missiology at the University of South Africa.

Implications

Several implications emerge for the work of the Institute from this study of the Great Commission:

1. The “as-you-go” nature of the Great Commission means that people whom Institute leaders meet as they lead seminars, interact in the community, and generally go about daily life are potential disciples of Christ. Christian businessmen and women who come from the United States to lead seminars at the Institute must see this “as-you-go,” over-the-long-haul method of evangelizing that is based on building relationships as the

⁶⁷ Robert Priest, “Who Gets ‘Socially Rich’ from Short-Term Missions?,” posted e-mail conversation between Robert Priest and Kurt Ver Beek on *Christianity Today* website: <http://www.ctlibrary.com/ct/2005/julyweb-only/52.0.html>, July 8, 2005.

⁶⁸ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 414.

methodology that is most culturally relevant in Greece. Greeks value relationships. Peter Kuzmic, professor of missions at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, states it as:

(a) need to reflect with the theology of creation as much as one does reflect with the theology of salvation.... Approaching people with the Gospel must employ the *imago dei* concept in treating them as candidates for salvation. The only way to stay high ethically is to love them because God loves them, not to love them out of any kind of feeling of superiority because that is a sense of pride. People must have freedom from structures to choose. Political, religious, and ethnic frameworks need not be the ones who collectively make the choice for people.⁶⁹

2. It is important to differentiate between the process of making disciples while teaching business education and letting Christ shine naturally through word and deed, and using business education carelessly just so that one can make an “evangelistic hit.”

3. In keeping with the on-going nature of discipling, only in time will the results of the work of the Institute become evident in the lives of individual people and in the community.

4. The goal of the Institute is to offer business education in a manner that reflects a Christian worldview and not a socialist or a capitalist worldview. This is important in order that Greek businesspeople will understand that the approach of the Institute’s business seminars is not just an American way of doing business but rather transcends national and international economic behaviors. The Institute seeks to avoid what has happened all too often as capitalism has been introduced into former communist countries. According to C. Neal Johnson, who has served as professor of missions at Fuller Theological Seminary and Biola University (among others), “regrettably, the model being pushed (in those countries) is a new capitalism, far from the original American-style capitalism that made the United States the economic envy of the world.

⁶⁹ Peter Kuzmic, “Mission and Cross Cultural Studies,” Mostar, Bosnia, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministries class discussion, January 2002.

This new capitalism is void of the Judeo-Christian ethic that formed the underpinnings of the legendary United States prosperity.”⁷⁰ It is not in the interest of the Institute to introduce business people to this faceless amoral type of capitalism of the “economic man.”

5. The Institute’s curriculum will reflect the ways in which the ethics of Jesus affect the marketplace; specifically integrity, honesty, justice, responsibility, accountability, profit, income, rest, and leisure. It will focus on ethics that affect trends such as consumerism and debt acquisition, both increasingly prevalent in Greece.

6. There is a need to infuse work with meaning. At the Institute, businesspeople will be taught that they are stewards and not owners of the abilities and assets which they received from their creator and that he expects these to be used for his glory. This, ultimately, is the only way to infuse work with meaning. Christian businesspeople will be taught to see work as the means through which God provides material goods for family and the workplace as a site where God can use them as witnesses of the joy God provides in the totality of life.

7. A Christian businessperson who trains other businesspeople has the opportunity to show by the example of a transparent life how God is involved in his/her everyday decision-making process.

8. The transformed lifestyle of committed Christian business people who assist in the Institute’s training program will be the model that helps Greek businesspeople who have only a vague understanding of Christ’s love for them to come to know him.

⁷⁰ C. Neal Johnson, “Towards a Marketplace Missiology,” *Missiology: An International Review* 31, no. 1 (January 2003): 94.

9. A focus on building relationships will be central in the work of the Institute. The Christian businessperson who relates to the Institute must understand that several paths of relational engagement in the marketplace are available in Greece. One is “the mission into the marketplace by outsiders, those who are not participants in the business community”⁷¹ but engage it through small business development projects, prayer walking, and/or venture capitalists, says Johnson. A second path is the “mission within the marketplace, in which Christians who are participants in the marketplace, and thus insiders, seek to evangelize, and disciple, and to network and encourage one another within their own work environment.”⁷² This step can occur simultaneously with the first or can follow when individuals want to move from a business education course into a Bible discussion group led by believers. The third path is when “mission through the marketplace addresses marketplace participants who are actively engaged in a Christian outreach function.”⁷³ Business education then becomes a vehicle to introduce others to Christian principles taught by Christian business people who have “God-given influence, resources, and expertise for Christ,”⁷⁴ Johnson says.

10. Beyond teaching the technical steps for developing an effective business plan, Institute leaders must be servant-teachers and models of the principle of accountability to God for all of one’s possessions and resources.

11. The Institute must partner with entities that are open to its efforts and attempt to energize their businesspeople for mission work.

⁷¹ Ibid., 91.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

12. The Institute provides opportunities for Christian businessmen and women from the United States to realize their God-given potential as lay leaders.

13. The work of this thesis-project will serve to introduce Kingdom principles through business education and will compliment the way in which the Great Commission will be applicable in Northern Greece.

Summary

A major conclusion of the review of the biblical framework for the Institute's function is the sure knowledge that its leaders can rely on God's sovereignty, self-existence, wisdom, absolutes, morality, and assignment of stewardship of the world to man.

A second conclusion is the acknowledgment that God did not give the Great Commandment in a vacuum but rather in the process of connecting man to himself and to others through Jesus Christ's obedience unto death. The Great Commandment would not be great if it did not relate God's love for a person to the ones with whom he networks, lives, and communicates. It is a love that flows out of obedience to Christ as the model. It is this God-type love exhibited by leaders in the Institute and applied in the business community and not the business education training itself that will make the eternal difference.

A third conclusion is that the Great Commission was given as the vehicle for Christ's strategy to establish and extend his Kingdom on the earth, thus the whole concept of the Kingdom is best described by:

Obedience to the entirety of Christ's Great Commission.... Dedication to ongoing initiatives to plant and build churches that model and proclaim the good news through their words (1 Pet 3:15) and their lifestyle of personal holiness

exemplified by Jesus Christ.... Establishment of alliances that cross international borders so that kingdom resources may be combined and mobilized in mutual centers of influence to spread the kingdom to the whole world.... Strategies to extend the kingdom by infiltrating all segments of society with preference given to the poor, and allowing no dichotomy between evangelism and social transformation (Lk 4:18-19).... Evangelism understood and embraced as the outcome of a lifestyle centered in true empathy based on love, genuine respect and willingness to address the deepest longings of others with good news of Jesus (1 Pet 3:15).... Restored understanding of God's people as co-laborers created by him to carry out his works (1 Cor 3:9; Eph 2:10.)⁷⁵

The Institute will attempt to address those components (For further information, see chapter 3). These descriptive elements of the Kingdom of God provide balance and a holistic approach to the task of being Kingdom-minded. The Holy Spirit is indeed the strategist. This approach offers the opportunity for great collaboration coupled with intentionality within the body of Christ.⁷⁶ An unprecedented opening awaits laity to live and function in sectors of society--such as the business marketplace--where God wants to extend his Kingdom.

⁷⁵ Engels and Dyrness, 80.

⁷⁶ Jn 17:21-23

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Knowledge of available literature concerning the historical, cultural, religious, political, and economic context in which the Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development operates is necessary in order to build a solid theoretical foundation for the organization. In addition, because most of the businessmen and women who will lead business seminars and other academic endeavours at the Institute will come from the United States, they will need a rudimentary knowledge of the Institute's setting and how it differs from the American scene. For the purposes of this thesis-project, the setting will be confined to Greece and will not include the other Balkan entities. This selective literature review will form the theoretical basis of the development of orientation for seminar leaders.

A selective literature review relating to Christian-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will provide resources for leaders of the Institute to use in developing its Christian-based philosophy. A limitation of this thesis-project is that most of the available literature was written in the United States. It should be noted that while secular NGOs do exist in Greece, the Interbalkan Institute is one of the first attempts to raise and address the issue of helping Christians apply biblical principles in the business world. Additionally, the director of the Institute

is involved in an effort to introduce Europartners,¹ a network of Christian businesspeople across Europe, to Greece (see related material in Appendix 5).

It should also be noted that when one writes about Greece, the role of the Greek Church is ever present. Thus, whether one is writing about the historical context, the cultural context, the political context, or the economic context, the religious context always emerges as well.

Historical Context

Leaders of any organization wishing to be successful must understand the history of the community or nation in which their organization offers its services. Past experiences in the life of a community or nation, including good times and difficult times, influence how citizens will interact with an organization no matter how potentially beneficial its contribution may be. An article in the journal *Exceptional Children* stresses the importance of cultural and historical contexts of groups and nationalities:

Cultural anthropologists and sociologists have traditionally studied the values and beliefs of different groups and subgroups of the world's population that underlie different concepts of quality of life (Donegan & Potts, 1988; Glesne & Peshkin, in press). These values and beliefs are embedded in the group's customs, language, traditions, literature, religion, art, and other day-to-day practices that take on shared meaning and value *for* members of the group. Many writers point out that cultural values are not static, but fluid and responsive to the political and *historical context* that groups of people experience; and these values reflect the efforts of members of the groups to actively make sense of their experiences (Ericson, 1990; Freire, 1970; Greene, 1990; McLaren, 1989). Most social groups today are affected by the mingling of their cultures with that of other groups and experience subcultural and individual diversity within their own groups, as well (Ericson, 1990; Mead, 1943).²

¹ Europartners is a Christian network of business persons applying their faith in the marketplace. For more information, see website: <http://www.europartners.org/ja/index.php>.

² Ruth E. Dennis, Wes Williams, Michael F. Giangreco, and Chigee J. Cloninger, "Quality of Life as Context for Planning and Evaluation of Services for People with Disabilities," *Exceptional Children* 59, no. 6 (1993), <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001668884>.

The complexity of the sum total of the forces operating in a society makes it essential that an organization working in a community be fully aware of and be ever in a learning mode about the people it serves.

Greece

Greece is a country with a long history, and Greeks have long memories. While the country is more than 3,000 years old, it was the 400-year occupation by the Ottoman Empire and Greece's emergence in the 1830s from being under the thumb of that regime that has most influenced Greece's current self-understanding. Maria Todorova, professor of history at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, describes accurately what was happening to the late-twentieth-century Greek identity:

Like all national identities, the Greeks have a hierarchy of multiple identities: a contemporary Greek would describe him or herself first as Greek, then with a local identity (Cretan, Macedonian, Epyrote, and so on), third as European, and only next as Balkan, Southern European, or Mediterranean. While there is no particular enthusiasm about their Balkanness, even a mocking resignation, the pejorative edge of the Greeks is reserved for the "Orient" (more concretely for Turkey), not for the Balkans. There is no denial about belonging to the Balkans. If anything, there has been historically an excess of superiority complex vis-à-vis the rest of the Balkans, tempered in the past few decades. Not only has Greece been historically central for the Balkan cosmos, but its main designs and political imagination until the recent past had been to a great extent focused on the Balkans. In academic life, "Balkan" is a notion that has a neutral and legitimate place: the leading institute for interdisciplinary research on the Balkans is the Institute for Balkan Studies in Thessaloniki, its main publication is the *Journal for Balkan Studies*, and a recent journal comes out under the title *Evrovalkania (Eurobalkans)*. Greece still views itself as playing a central role in the peninsula although nowadays this role is not considered a priority. Official pronouncements are unequivocal: "The Balkans for Greece is not merely a dangerous region somewhere in the world. Greece is part of the Balkans." Defining itself as the only "Balkan member" of the European Union, Greece feels a particular responsibility for the stability of the Balkans and has lately endorsed an initiative to create an "Open Balkan University." While proud of being the only European "Balkanites," Greeks display a concern over the threat to their distinctiveness, and there is a growing tendency "to preserve a static organic notion--a nexus of

state, nation, religion, and Greekness--as formulated in the early nineteenth century." Obviously, with the process of European integration getting ahead, Greece will face mounting pressures to reconstruct its identity. Still, what one can observe in the Greek case is that despite ongoing disputes over identity and the Angst in some circles over losing their essence--the Romeiosini--the place of Greece in the institutionalized framework of the European Union has conferred on it a remarkable sense of security, so much so that it can be postulated that in the Greek case one may speak of "the bearable heaviness of being" Balkan.³

At times during the four-hundred-year Ottoman rule, the fusion of nationality and religious affiliation was beneficial in helping to sustain the Greekness and the Christian identity of the people; however, as Greeks faced the accelerating changes of the twentieth century and as they now face those of the twenty-first century, more often than not that fusion has been an obstacle for both the Church and the state in attempting to meet the challenges brought about by those changes.

The positive side is that, as commentator Evripidis Stylianidis wrote in 2005 in the Greek daily newspaper *Kathimerini*, "the development of the Balkans from a powder keg of Europe to a European region of stability and cooperation creates for our country a new national and financial dynamic that allows us to capitalize the potential of our market, the experience of our policies, and the advantages of our civilization."⁴ It is true that opportunities exist, yet it remains to be seen to what degree the country will capitalize on its strengths at this time in history.

³ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 44-45.

⁴ Evripidis Stylianidis, "Η Βαλκανική διεύρυνση της Ευρώπης" [The Balkan Expansion of Europe] *Kathimerini*, October 30, 2005, 4.

The United States

The United States is a nation with only a 230-year-old history, and Americans have short memories. Over the years to a large extent the peoples from many nations and cultures have reached America's shores ready to open new pages in their own personal and family histories, leaving behind the lands of their birth and the people to whom they were connected. Their new histories have grown out of the grafting of their own past onto the new norms of America. In that sense, a new hybrid history began for immigrants and for the nation. Larry L. Naylor, professor of anthropology at the Institute of Anthropology at the University of North Texas, writes:

There is something that can be called American culture. It exists in the beliefs, practices, and products (both material and social) that all Americans share regardless of other cultural affiliations they recognize for themselves. All Americans share the same orienting ideas on which the country was founded and they all must adhere to behavioral expectations (prerequisite behaviors and a single law), and they all share the same institutional structures and organizational systems for meeting their needs and wants. Americans share the same set of orienting ideas as laid out in their founding documents and embodied in the American Dream. Members of all cultural groups subscribe to this embodiment and pursue it for themselves and their groups. The American dream is not a fixed thing, but a fluid standard that allows for gradations and provides that no level of achievement of the Dream is ever enough. But every American and every constituent group that combines to make up the whole of American society subscribes to it and pursues it. Every immigrant to the shores of the United States comes for it and enters its pursuit. The dream revolves around, and focuses on, freedom and individuality, diversity and conformity, all at the same time. More important, it is used to measure the individual's success in this world. It accounts for the intense competition among individuals, it accounts for the competitiveness among constituent groups of Americans, it accounts for the paradoxes in the culture (differences in the ideal and real cultural form) with which they have to live, and the conflicts between them as individuals and groups.⁵

No matter how ancient his/her native country may be, once in the United States an immigrant learns to think in terms of the new society with its dream and values and

⁵ Larry L. Naylor, *American Culture: Myth and Reality of a Culture of Diversity* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1998), 151, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=23328372>.

adjusts memory to the new context with its relatively brief history compared to civilizations like Greece.

Cultural Context

“Religion is popular culture” writes Daniel Stout of Brigham Young University in *Religion and Popular Culture: Studies on the Interaction of Worldviews*.⁶ Inside the culture are religious fingerprints that affect society. Those fingerprints are carried by culture and are expressed in a variety of ways, but nevertheless find their way into the everyday lives of citizens. The power of culture and its “politics” are at the forefront in any nation--whether it be Greece or the United States. How is the religious component of the culture communicated in a society? Writing about the American scene, Richard Neuhaus, president of the Institute on Religion and Public Life, speaks to how Americans experience religion and culture today and explains:

One notes again that "culture" is derived from the Latin *cultus*, meaning what we revere or worship or hold ourselves accountable to. Culture politics is therefore a contention over what religious or quasi-religious moral tradition, if any, will guide our deliberating and deciding how we ought to order our life together. In this country, composed of these people with their history and associational allegiances, that contention inevitably engages the reality of Christian America.⁷

Neuhaus further points out that what one adores and holds as valuable, worth noticing, and crucial for the way one lives and makes decisions in the society in which one lives is part of one's culture--and religious overtones definitely are present. This is

⁶ Daniel Stout, “Beyond Culture Wars: An Introduction to the Study of Religion and Popular Culture,” in *Religion and Popular Culture: Studies on the Interaction of Worldviews*, eds. Daniel A. Stout and Judith M. Buddenbaum (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 2001), 8.

⁷ Richard John Neuhaus, "Culture Politics, and Other Kinds," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, April 2001, 68, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000974700>.

true, he says, because all the values and beliefs people hold about themselves and the world around them are rooted in the moral and religious traditions they hold sacred and necessary for their daily lives.

Greece

Religion as popular culture is very evident in Greece. One only has to observe how most religious holidays are intertwined in the Greek culture and how many cultural traditions are so interwoven with the Orthodox religion that it is nearly impossible to discern if a custom or practice is just a cultural or just a religious tradition. For instance, March 25 is celebrated as Independence Day marking the day of the declaration of the war of independence from the Ottoman Empire, but it also is celebrated as the day the Virgin Mary was visited by the angel who announced to her that she would give birth to the Christ. Another example is the celebration of the feast of St. Demetrius, patron saint of Thessaloniki, and the celebration of the city's liberation from the Turks on the same day--October 26. Such interweaving of the cultural/political with the religious provides mutual protection and preservation for both culture and religion. In recent years, this has been most evident as in the wake of the influx of refugees from Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, and other Central Asian countries, Greece remains a mostly homogeneous culture and overwhelmingly Orthodox.

In *Hellas (Greece): The Contemporary Continuation From 1821 Until Today*, historians Thanos Veremis and Giannis Koliolopoulos write that:

during the centuries long isolation of the various regions between them and the Western Europe, and with the general ignorance of the public, human sets were created isolated from one another, with distinct characteristics and without the sense that they were all consisted of one human community with common characteristics, one nation. The cultural distance from the conquerors from other

religions and the entrenchment protected the Greeks from assimilation and national obliteration. The analogous distancing from those in the West contributed to the preservation of diversified national elements and their strengthening, especially of those worshipping elements of religion. It did come, however, at a cost: It reinforced the xenophobia and the bigotry, the contempt towards those of other religions and the heterodox Christians, the suspiciousness for ideas, principles and lifestyle of the other religion conquerors and the heterodox Westerners.⁸ (translation by the author of this study)

Although, much time has passed since 1821, the remains of four and a half centuries of Ottoman occupation and the bad experience with the West before and after that time have left traces of those attitudes on contemporary Greece. In its effort to maintain her identity as a nation in the European family of nations--most of which are part of the West and non-orthodox tradition--Greece struggles to deal with the newly arriving immigrants from the Baltic countries and the former Soviet Union and their place in the Greek society as these immigrants infuse their own cultural nuances.

A 2007 nationwide survey illustrates that struggle well. Eighty-eight percent of those Greeks surveyed felt foreign immigrants are not a problem in their neighborhood yet 88 percent thought no more immigrants should be allowed into Greece because the ones already in Greece are enough for a small country. Fifty-four percent felt immigrants are good for the economy yet 56 percent attribute the rise in unemployment to immigrants, and 65 percent say they are the cause of an increase in crime in their communities. Sixty-eight percent felt immigrants are no threat to the orthodoxy of Greece, yet 52 percent do not want to see a mosque built in Athens. Sixty-two percent said immigrants should be allowed to vote, yet 47 percent could not imagine immigrants running for public office. Eighty-three percent approved the enrollment of the children of

⁸ ΘΑΝΟΣ ΒΕΡΕΜΗΣ ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ ΚΟΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (Thanos Veremis, Giannis Koliopoulos), *Ελλάς: Η σύγχρονη συνέχεια ΑΠΟ ΤΟ 1821 ΜΕΧΡΙ ΣΗΜΕΡΑ* [Hellas: The Contemporary Continuation From 1821 Until Today] (Athens, Greece: Kastaniotis Publishers, 2006), 34.

immigrants in the Greek public schools.⁹ All this indicates that Greeks are tolerant while at the same time they are unsure as to how to treat the immigrants from the other Balkan countries, especially Albania, and other former Soviet Union countries like Ukraine. Some of the statistics also reveal racist attitudes.

The problem is exacerbated by the mass media that contributes to some of the negative images of the foreigners, according to Giannis Panousis, professor and president of the department of Mass Media of the University of Athens. Panousis claims that 71 percent of reporters do not understand immigration and immigrants, and that 32 percent of them are investigative reporters. Hence, they are more able to talk about crimes related to immigrants rather than about the social and cultural life of the communities where immigrants live.¹⁰

The government is attempting to improve the immigrant-nationals situation in some parts of the country. For example, in Thrace, in Northeastern Greece, the government finances a program that educates minority Muslim women in organic farming, traditional dressmaking, and local food preparation. Some of the women also participate in a government-sponsored program to learn the Greek language.¹¹ Following the lead of universities to be more open to minorities, the government also has moved to place Muslim individuals in the public sector. Recently, Minister of Foreign Affairs Dora

⁹ Maria Delithanasi, Θολή εικόνα Ελλήνων για τους μετανάστες [A Murky Picture of Greeks Concerning Immigrants] *Kathimerini* February 15, 2007, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_ell_100030_15/02/2007_216058.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Stavros Tzimas, Ανάγκη η κοινωνική ένταξη της μουσουλμάνας γυναίκας (There is a Need for social integration of Muslim women), *Kathimerini*, February 7, 2007, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_627038_07/02/2007_215051.

Bakogiannis announced that the actions are part of the “contemporary European minority policies...to make Thrace a model of an open democratic society”¹²

Over the years that Greece has been a member of the European Union, the government has gradually disengaged from the stronghold it held over the people. For example, monopolies have been brought down, albeit slowly. Another example is the establishment of telecommunications networks has been slower in Greece than in the rest of Western Europe. Until 1987, it was illegal to operate a private radio or television station. The monopoly of state-run television and radio stations resulted in very slow steps towards progress. When EU directives made it imperative to break up the monopoly, the quality of technology began to improve. And, as for telephone service, in 1949, only one Greek in 100 had a telephone; by the 1980s, the number was 57 in 100. Today, that number has greatly improved with the availability of cellular phones for everyone and every budget. As for land-line phones, the average waiting period for a line has been reduced from four years in 1980 to one day today. By 1994, mobile telephony was introduced and several private companies began to compete with OTE, the state-run telecommunications company. Plans are to privatize further the public telephone company.

The irony is that in 1987, it was a public figure, the mayor of Thessaloniki, who established the first city-owned television and radio station in Greece, thus challenging the system and breaking the monopoly. Today there is a plethora of radio and television stations, almost to the point that the airwaves are congested with poor quality programming. Initially, the prevailing thought was that with the presence of privately

¹² Stavros Tzimas, Θα διορίζονται στο Δημόσιο οι μειονοτικοί [Minorities Will be Placed in Public Jobs] *Kathimerini*, February 6, 2007, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_406564_06/02/2007_214901.

owned television stations, news and information will be more objective and the government stations would suffer. But the opposite has happened. A 2005 survey conducted by a research group for a newspaper indicated the following: 71 percent of Greek viewers felt the news programs were presented in such a way to create impressions that attract viewers and not to report just the facts; 52 percent claimed there is exaggeration in reports and 15 percent felt the tele-journalists are arrogant. Seventy-three percent of viewers saw the private stations as serving primarily the business interests of their owners and going beyond the limits of what the state constitution allows them to do. It is not surprising then 36 percent of the viewers rate state-run television as more reputable and trustworthy than a private channel.¹³ All this indicates that mass media is still in its infancy in Greece and the power of television is in the hands of people who can make or destroy others with little pressure from the government to stay within constitutional parameters. To a degree, this helps explain the mass media's ability to influence the image of immigrants in Greek society.

The lack of well-trained professionals in the media negatively affects other sectors of Greek society as well. For instance, businesspeople do not have a clear perception of how to use media for advertising. One radio station expressed the view that their clients opt for the ads with the cheapest rate although they may not be effective for their business. Also, there are no clear policies regarding what is and what is not objectionable to air on television, and which stations need to be licensed and which need to be shut down. The bottom line is that what culturally would not be acceptable for viewing in the United States can be presented in Greece in prime time with little or no

¹³ T. Pappas, "Πονηρή, υπερβολική, αλαζονική και μετά ενημερωτική" [Sly, Exaggerating, Supercilious, and Then Informative] *Κυριακάτικη_Ελευθεροτυπία*, October 30, 2005.

objection from the public since the viewing public's ability to exert a strong voice of opinion to the media is still weak. There are no clear criteria. Thankfully, the print media and newspapers as well as radio are more trustworthy.

As to Internet usage, in July 2003, DSL--fast access internet use--was introduced to Greece; as of 2007, it still is not affordable for most people. Only 20 percent of the population have used the Internet; the government's goal is to raise this to 40 percent by 2008.

This rather bleak picture of mass media in Greece affords the opportunity for organizations to enter this arena of society with quality programs that are Christian-values based (i.e. relationships, dealing with finances, debt, business ethics, nature, etc.) and address real needs of people. One of the goals of the Interbalkan Institute is to work with Christians who are experts in the field of mass communications in order to influence programming and policies regarding the quality of that programming. The Institute is well on its way in this process.

On a broader scale, Sir Ernest Barker, a political scientist and professor at the London School of Economics, has studied the way a state creates a moral society. Looking at ancient Greece and Rome, he concluded that "...the ancient State was also a Church."¹⁴ Hence, ever since antiquity the state--whether it was Rome or Byzantium, or post-Ottoman Greece--has existed with the interdependent arrangement of the Church and the state keeping the balance and the authority in the hands of both for their mutual benefit or survival. Thus, even today culture is in the religion and religion is in the culture in Greece.

¹⁴ Ernest Barker, *Church, State, and Education* (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press, 1957), 11, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=53146071>.

In Greece, the popular/religious culture is looked upon as a way to preserve the connection of the Greek people to their national identity. It is a way to protect their Orthodox roots against an onslaught of non-Greek western ideas and eastern (Orient) mysticism that is becoming increasingly popular. Popular culture is not seen as a threat to religion nor is religion seen as a threat to popular culture.

Religion as culture is perpetuated through such means as religious television programming. Today, the Orthodox Church owns the only religious channel in Greece and uses it to broadcast liturgies based on the Church calendar; programs that deal with issues important to the Church, such as when in 2001 the government proposed removing the listing of religious affiliation from the state IDs; and discussions about the separation of Church and state, which the archbishop sees as anti-Greek.¹⁵

Another example occurred in September 2006 when a communiqué from the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs went to all schools stating that no priests would be allowed to conduct confessions with students on school premises since that is work which needs to be done in a church setting, not a school setting. True to form, the archbishop saw this as ostracizing the Church from the public square.¹⁶

Most of the remaining programming on the religious television channel presents cultural themes from various parts of the country with emphasis on how the Church and folk culture connect. There are very few sermons and little coverage of issues rocking Greek society, such as family concerns, youth needs, drugs, gangs, and the uncertainty in

¹⁵ Grigoris Kalokairinos, “Αψιμαχίες κυβέρνησης - Εκκλησίας λόγω του δημοψηφίσματος Του” [Skirmishes Between Government and Church Due to the Referendum] *Kathimerini*, June 21, 2001, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_ell_102509_21/06/2001_5006412.

¹⁶ Nikos Papachristou, “Χριστόδουλος: Σε κατάσταση επιφυλακής” [Christodoulos: Guarded Situation] *Kathimerini*, October 11, 2006, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_498985_11/10/2006_201022.

the marketplace. Coverage of some of those topics, especially ethics and religious themes, originate in parent/teacher association meetings in various cities and towns. The overall effort is not adequate; however, the Archdiocese of Greece has expressed concern that more trained qualified pastoral counselors are needed to help deal with these topics.

Religion as culture also is seen in a rather subtle relationship between the Church and science. For instance, with regards to evolution and the introduction of creationism in schools, in general the Church just does not deal with these issues and there are no official dialogues or debates concerning these matters. In a newspaper article, Eleftheria Traiou avows that the Orthodox Church does not deal with these topics while Roman Catholics and the late Pope John Paul II have left the issue alone because it is too complex. She notes, however, that the Orthodox Church does not accept the “by chance mechanism for existence.”¹⁷

Religion as culture also is seen in Greek society in the issue of education. The modern Greek education system began after the Independence of Greece in 1822 and featured a combination of the French Elementary School Law of 1833, the Bavarian system of secondary education, and the pre-World War I German University system. Many elements of that system survived until 1992. Three of those elements were the *Katharevousa*--the artificial official state language (no longer taught in public schools)--centralization, and the influence of the Orthodox Church of Greece on the public schools. In 1976, compulsory education was raised from six years to nine, adult education was

¹⁷ Eleftheria Traiou, “Ο Δημιουργός ερίζει με τον Δαρβίνο: Ενάμιση αιώνα μετά την «καταγωγή των ειδών» η θεωρία της εξέλιξης εξακολουθεί να διχάζει και να μη διδάσκεται” [The Creator Disagrees with Darwin: One and Half Century after the “Origin of Species” the Theory Continues to Divide and not to be Taught] *Katimerini*, June 11, 2006, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_civ_370494_11/06/2006_186914.

decentralized, and technical education programs were introduced to focus more on the practical rather than academic expertise. A new emphasis was placed on mathematics, analytical thinking, the physical sciences, and individualized teaching.

The recent centralization of the population in large urban centers has contributed to the deterioration of education in the rural areas and to large class sizes in urban areas. From 1974 until 1981, the socialist government had increased the educational portion of the annual national budget by 50 percent. Today, the dream of most young people is to enter university. According to the European Union educational service “Eurydice,” Greece has the highest percentage of young people in higher education of all 27-member states, but upon graduation Greek youth have difficulty finding employment since available jobs are mostly for specialists and managers in fields in which the universities do not focus.¹⁸ There is little or no communication between the academic and economic sectors and as a result the supply of trained personnel to meet the needs of industry and the new technologies is minimal. The result is that many university graduates have prepared for jobs that do not exist. It also means that the educational system still functions with an industrial-era mindset in the midst of today’s technology and information era.

One fallout of the abundance of unemployed graduates is the rush to find a teaching job in an already overcrowded system where one has to wait for several years to be hired as teacher or a professor in primary or secondary education. And even when teachers finally do get a job, most are not prepared to teach since they are not required to have training for teacher certification. Apostolos Kakasas, in his article “Educators

¹⁸ Apostolos Lakasas, “Αιμορραγεί το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα” [The Education System Is Bleeding] *Καθημερινή*, December 17, 2005.

Without Teacher Training,” says that 93 percent of the educational courses taught are in the form of dry lectures by the professors and only 4 percent emphasize practicum and application of the theory of education.¹⁹ So, for example, a chemist may know his subject but have no training to teach it to others. A great need for foundational educational reform is evident. The need for compliance with the EU educational regulations in the 1990s did force the government to seek more reforms based on West European standards, but these were met with stiff resistance from the academic establishment and viewed as new ways to introduce western “marketplace concepts” in a setting that culturally should keep its Greekness “as is.”

This push, in turn, has resulted in two major points of debate on behalf of the teachers and professors as well as university administration. First, there is resistance to the concept of evaluation and professional development. Teachers and professors who have been teaching for many years have never been evaluated. Because of the heavy politicization of issues such as education in the Greek domain, many of them see evaluation as a means for the ruling political party to “get at those” of other political parties and promote their own faithful. According to Panagiotis Alekakis, vice president of the secondary education literature teachers group in the province of Pieria, they also do not want “...to connect evaluation with any bearing on their salaries, only to be used as a suggestive tool for professional development and improvement of public education.”²⁰ One of Alekakis’ arguments is that evaluations have not helped Anglo-Saxon educational systems.

¹⁹ Apostolos Lakasas, “Εκπαιδευτικοί χωρίς γνώσεις διδασκαλίας [Educators Without Knowledge of Teaching] *Καθημερινή*, March 21, 2005.

²⁰ Panagiotis Alekakis, “Για την αξιολόγηση των εκπαιδευτικών” [For the Evaluation of the Educators] *Επτά*, December 19, 2005, 36.

The second issue is the emerging presence of private higher education entities and the recognition by government certification agencies of the degrees they grant as being equal to the diplomas of the state universities. In an article titled “Higher Education: Upside Down,” the president of the Association of University Faculty, Christos Trikalinos, is quoted as saying that “the recognition of rights to a free [educational] market undermines the foundation of our universities, that became a target from all sides including the state itself by under funding college education.... To the contrary, the recognition of the diplomas by business enterprises sharpens the problem of fast food diplomas. The university community will resist similar decisions.”²¹ It is evident that there exists a fear that education will become business, and that making degrees granted by the state universities equal in value to those of foreign universities that will open campuses in Greece will lessen the aura of the Greek University diplomas. Another reality that is not discussed openly is that private higher education with its contemporary, relevant policies and methodologies will respond more effectively to the educational demands of the twenty-first century. The result is that the public universities argue that if private universities, such as the world-renowned London School of Economics, are allowed to function in Greece, they will promote elitism and that only the rich will be able to enjoy the benefits of such institutions. In the meantime, everyone involved with Greek public education complains that it is antiquated and it needs reform.

The need for change in the educational system is so obvious that in the wake of a new reform law that was proposed by the Greek government in early 2007, even the leftist associate dean of the Agricultural University, Leonidas Louloudis, agreed that the

²¹ Christos Trikalinos, “Άνω κάτω η ανώτατη εκπαίδευση” [Higher Education in Turmoil] *Το Βήμα*, May 23, 2004, A30.

changes made after the dictatorship years (1967-1974) to allow university students to have a say in the affairs of academia has gone too far. Now, the students are the ones trying to run the university, staging occupation of campus buildings, and not allowing classes to meet. In an article in the Sunday *Eleftherotypia* newspaper, Trikalinos said: “We on the left should have said: ‘It’s enough.’ And yet we are the ones who are now the leaders of conservatism. Instead, the leftist party should be the ones who want to change the world. But the so called leftists do not want to change anything.... I know that I sleep at peace with myself at night, even if I love my work, which however, I cannot do. I am an associate dean in a chaos.”²²

The United States

American Christians generally have a love-hate relationship with popular culture. In the United States, religion and popular culture often are at odds, says J. Quentin Schultze, professor of communication at Calvin College, in an article titled “Touched by Angels and Demons: Religion’s Love-Hate Relationship with Popular Culture.”²³ Many evangelicals view popular culture with suspicion, seeing it as a potential threat that can destabilize their biblical roots and introduce a populist religion. One such example is that of famous Christian artists with two failed marriages who can continue to sell their CDs supported by their Christian marketing enterprises, thus giving the impression that their popularity can somehow neutralize their behavior. After all, their careers dare not miss a beat. Wendy Murray Zoba, associate editor of *Christianity Today*, notes that “if nothing

²² Maria Papoutsaki, “Τριάντα χρόνια στα συλλαλητήρια” [Thirty Years in Protest] *Eleftherotypia*, February 18, 2007.

²³ J. Quentin Schultze, “Touched by Angels and Demons: Religion’s Love-Hate Relationship with Popular Culture,” in *Religion and Popular Culture: Studies on the Interaction of Worldviews*, eds. Stout and Buddenbaum (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 2001), 42.

else, they are public communicators who knowingly and willingly bear Christ's name in their very public ministries. They wield influence over their followers and have accepted and benefited from this visible mantle. They lead. They inspire. They 'pump up.' Sometimes they stumble."²⁴ If they do all these things, then being icons of popular culture somehow renders unnecessary the painful process of evaluating what went wrong and the need to make restitution. Hence, it seems the principles for living for Christians in the religious popular culture are different than for those people who are not in the limelight.

Given the diversity of religions and religious groups or denominations within specific religions in the United States, it is impossible to ascribe the popular culture to any particular group such as is possible with the Orthodox Church in Greece. Gretchen Siegler, anthropology professor at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah, defines a denomination as a "large religious group" that is accepted by a society as a part of its "civil religion." She further says:

a civil religion shapes the world view of the members of a society by embodying a belief system that incorporates that which comes out of the denominational faiths. It results in a totality of values, or ideals and beliefs based on those things which people feel strongly about. An adherence to these shared understandings about the proper ways of behaving sets American culture apart from other cultures, and provides an identity as a society. Compared to other societies, America exhibits a variety of denominations. This religious pluralism is primarily a result of the separation of church and state combined with ethnic diversity from immigration.²⁵

²⁴ Wendy Murray Zoba, "Popular Culture: Take a Little Time Out: Amy Grant's Ever-smiling Face is Everywhere, Obscuring the Tragedy of Two Failed Marriages," *Christianity Today*, February 7, 2000, <http://www.ctlibrary.com/15210>.

²⁵ Gretchen Siegler, "17 New Religious Movements," in *Cultural Diversity in the United States*, ed. Larry L. Naylor (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1997), 259-260, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=15586446>.

If sects and cults are added to those civil religions, it becomes very difficult for any single one of those groups to become dominant. Yet, in religious groups with large constituencies, there is a commonality of culture that tends to pull their followers together.

Ironically, the “unifying role of religious popular culture in American Christianity presents two potential problems,” writes Shultze. “First, religious popular culture can polarize groups within society by antagonizing people who do not share the same beliefs.... Secondly, religious popular culture can weaken established religious traditions.”²⁶ Thus biblical principles can be diluted when popular culture plays too large a role in the lives of committed Christians who allow the thinking of the majority to alter their beliefs.

In America, Christianity often becomes politicized to the point that adherents cannot distinguish between a Christian point of view or a particular political party’s view encased in Christian language. Stephen Mott, former professor of Christian social ethics at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, addresses clearly the attitudes of Christians about politics:

The lack of thinking by Christians about the relationship of theology to politics produces naive political thinking and wrongly directed political acts. The serious problem of the lack of Christian involvement in the struggle for social justice arises. Some Christians simply separate themselves from social questions. They find what Jacques Ellul describes as a cheap yet absurd feeling of relief from responsibility for anything public. Other Christians have not withdrawn from political engagement yet have not examined what a Christian direction in politics might be. Some Christians engage in politics very consciously as Christians yet their political positions do not appear to be in accord with a careful application of valid theological guidelines for Christian political thought. Christians can be very intentionally involved in politics as Christians without their politics being Christian. Differences will exist among the readers and the author in identifying to whom that description applies. Being genuinely grounded as a

²⁶ J. Quentin Schultze, 42.

Christian means that this judgment must be made by a sincere examination of carefully established principles of Christian political thought, not by party or class loyalty or commitment to a particular issue or cause.²⁷

And while it is impossible to meld popular culture and religion in the United States in the manner in which it occurs in Greece, it is possible to document several ways in which popular culture impacts religion:

1. The symbolic marketplace. In the United States, “in contemporary life the ways of being religious have moved out of the protected sphere of religious institution and tradition and into the open ground of the symbolic marketplace,”²⁸ says Stewart Hoover, professor of journalism and adjunct professor of religious studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder. This is especially evident in how evangelicals have co-opted the electronic media--which the popular culture uses to inculcate its values--as an effective tool for propagating their religious beliefs both at home and abroad. Thanks to television, no longer is an American Christian exposed solely to the way church is done in his or her local congregation, but now he or she can experience diverse theological and worship styles from a wide array of religious groups via broadcasts from across the nation. The average American churchgoer and viewer of religious television programming also is exposed to themes and issues affecting the community and the popular culture. In an analysis of a 1984 Gallop poll about religious television, Robert Wuthnow, director of the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University, determined that the medium of television engages church members with issues that challenge them to be involved with

²⁷ Stephen Charles Mott, *A Christian Perspective on Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 8, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=89536022>.

²⁸ Stewart M. Hoover, “Religion, Media, and the Cultural Center of Gravity,” in *Religion and Popular Culture: Studies on the Interaction of Worldviews*, eds. Stout and Buddenbaum, 51.

their votes and funds beyond their local church at a national and international level.

Wuthnow says:

religious television has been used to raise funds and to develop mailing lists for political campaigns; it has also played a major role in aggregating the resources needed to build alternative educational institutions, such as Liberty Baptist College, CBN University, and Oral Roberts University. At the grassroots level, viewers are also aware of the more public uses of religious television; for example, about one quarter of the viewers in the Religious Television Survey said they liked to watch in order to “know more about what's happening in the world” and an equal number said they appreciated getting “information about important moral or social issues.”²⁹

The impact, however, of Christian television programming has not alienated churchgoers from their local congregations. Some of their needs are met by the television “church” and other needs are met by a local church, according to Wuthnow.³⁰

According to the respondents in the study, watching religious television provided them with inspiration, information, and music as well as preaching at times when it was not available at their local church. While they continued to prefer their local church for preaching and inspiration, they especially preferred their local church for such experiences as worship, feeling close to God, and companionship or fellowship with other believers. In other words, the communal and ritual aspects of religion continued to be valued highly and those things were provided mainly, as should be expected, by local churches rather than by television.³¹

No longer, however, is an American Christian’s local church pastor the only authority on matters of faith. Again, Wuthnow explains that “with several hundred

²⁹ Robert Wuthnow, "The Social Significance of Religious Television," *Review of Religious Research* 29, no. 2 (1987), 128, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=96270217>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 130.

different denominations, sects, and cults to choose from, every individual can pretty much tailor his or her religious views to personal taste. As individuals are increasingly exposed to the teachings of different faiths through books, television, travel, and geographic mobility, eclecticism becomes the likely result. This tendency is also reinforced by the highly individualistic ethos in American culture which asserts the individual's freedom of conscience in matters of religion."³² As much as leaders of religious groups in the United States may want to preserve their own doctrines and ways of doing church, now they must cope with laity who are exposed to a variety of denominational and independent ministries and programs and who can pick and choose the norms, doctrines, and symbols they understand to embody the Christian faith.

According to a 2005 survey by the Barna Research group, things have not changed much since Wuthnow completed his work in the late 1980s:

The percentage of adults who watch Christian television programming has remained unchanged since 1992, with an estimated 45% [sic] tuning in to a Christian program during a typical month. Relatively few adults (7%) watch Christian television on a daily basis. About four out of ten adults (41%) never watch such programming. Christian television draws its strength from people in their 60s and older, females, residents of the South, African-Americans, people with limited education and income, and born again Christians. Two-thirds of the born again population views Christian programming each month, which is more than double the proportion of non-born again adults (30%) who follow that pattern. The segments of the public least likely to watch Christian TV include mainline Protestants, Catholics, unchurched people, Asian-Americans and college graduates.³³

A phenomenon that bears watching is the fact that, thanks to 24-hour television stations broadcast via satellite, Greeks now can watch many of the same well-known

³² Ibid., 126.

³³ Barna Update, "More People Use Christian Media Than Attend Church," March 14, 2005, <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=184>.

evangelical preachers and churches in the United States that Americans watch. It remains to be seen how influential this religious programming will be and what impact it will have on a different ethnic group in another nation where the overwhelming majority has a different popular culture and norms than those of the United States.

2. The religious book market. With the adoption of popular culture marketing techniques, popular religious authors have become household names. Witness the enormous popularity of the books *The Prayer of Jabez* by Bruce Wilkinson³⁴ and *The Purpose-Driven Life* by Rick Warren³⁵ as well as related merchandise in the form of cards, tracts, Bibles, and other paraphernalia.

3. Boycotts. Out of the uneasy relationship between popular culture and religion in the United States has arisen the phenomenon of “unifying consumers who are concerned about evil effects of mainstream popular culture”³⁶ for purposes of boycotting products and businesses. In recent years, groups of conservative American Christians have boycotted such businesses as Walt Disney entertainment theme parks when they have felt those businesses undermined Christian values and mores and were not acting in accordance with biblical standards. According to *Christianity Today*, in 1997 organizations and denominations, such as the [Assemblies of God](#), had been boycotting Disney for two years, “citing the company's pro homosexual and antifamily policies and products.”³⁷

³⁴ Bruce Wilkinson, *The Prayer of Jabez* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Books, U. S., 2000).

³⁵ Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

³⁶ Schultze, 42.

³⁷ Gayle White, “[Disney Boycott Gathers Steam](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/7tb/7tb84a.html),” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/7tb/7tb84a.html>.

In contrast, in Greece, to boycott a product or company for ethical or biblical reasons is simply not a part of the Greek consumer mentality. A Greek simply would not see the connection between ethics, religion, and the marketplace. On the other hand, nationalism Greeks understand. Nationalism has led to such actions as the massive boycott of Coca Cola in 1996 by Greek consumers because Atlanta won the bid over Athens to host the Olympic Games. Greeks felt that because the games originated in Greece and because 1996 was the one hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the modern Olympic Games, Greece naturally should host the 1996 games. Evangelos Spyropoulos, contributor to *East European Quarterly*, wrote about the impact on Greeks of losing the 1996 Olympic Games:

Athenians were stunned by their loss. It seemed as if the entire country was paralyzed by disappointment. Greeks knew that they had a problem when the Greek Olympic Committee's chairman had angered many IOC members by declaring that, 'Morally, the Games belong to Greece.' Greeks, on the other hand, did not know or had forgotten that when IOC officials twice had visited Athens to examine the situation on the spot, they had to meet the Greek Olympic Committee's members in another place because the latter's offices were occupied by strikers.³⁸

It is interesting to note that the boycotts and the strikes over labor issues were the very elements that created the concern that kept the international committee from awarding the games to Athens. Strikes over labor issues, social security, and education reform are usual happenings in Greece, but none of those have anything to do with the religious dimension of the Greek soul.

4. The interplay of science and religion. In the free marketplace of ideas in the United States, Protestant--particularly evangelical--inquiry into ethical questions and

³⁸ Evangelos Spyropoulos, "Sports and Politics: Goodbye Sydney 2000-Hallo Athens 2004," *East European Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2004), <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5006267551>.

moral dilemmas has provided the scientific community another parameter to consider in its quest for knowledge and its application in everyday life. In his book, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science*, James Gilbert, distinguished professor in the department of history at the University of Maryland, College Park, writes that science and religion stand at a healthy tension in the United States because of those inquisitive Christian ethicists and scientists who voice their concerns for balance in the marketplace of ideas in the fields of medicine and science.³⁹ He goes on to say:

the preponderance of scientists with protestant [sic] backgrounds at the center of the American scientific enterprise may or may not indicate the hospitality of certain forms of religious sects for laboratory research and scientific speculation. But it does suggest the relevance of Protestant culture for the encounter of American science with issues of religion. The very familiarity of scientists with forms of Protestantism suggests that their response to challenges to the self-sufficiency of science and the ethics of the scientific community would be explored along Protestant lines.⁴⁰

One example is the contribution of the evangelical community to the religion-science dialogue in American society that came in the 1950s with the Moody Science Films that integrated scientific discoveries and biblical teachings. Through those films, Christians made significant contributions to science and kept open the dialogue concerning scripture and scientific discovery. The dialogue needs to be ongoing, according to Chuck Colson who writes:

As Christians, we often hear the charge that faith is hostile to science. But this "warfare" image is artificial. In *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, Becker shows that the first modern historians, such as Voltaire, were Enlightenment rationalists who sought to discredit Christianity by casting it as an enemy of science and progress. But today the historical facts are destroying that stereotype. Christians ought to reclaim our heritage in

³⁹ James Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 60.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 60-61.

science. God calls us to "take every thought captive to obedience to Christ." And if we don't, there is no telling what "compelling" new (false) myths scientists will concoct to feed our society's deep spiritual hunger.⁴¹

The effort continues today through public forums that engage the scientific community in healthy dialogue and debates. In 2000, Jordan Lite of the magazine *Wired.com* referred to Francis Collins, the "geneticist extraordinaire" and a Christian, as "still smiling ear-to-ear over the [recently completed sequencing](#) of the human genome, Collins the scientist is nonetheless engaged in an internal battle with Collins the believer over [just how far is far enough](#) in the quest to learn how humans work."⁴² It is an indication that scientists in their respective fields can come to grips with how their discoveries impact human life. Lite quotes Collins as saying that "God gave us ... a curiosity to understand his creation. I don't think we need to worry that we will move into an exploration that will embarrass him."⁴³ In other words, Christian scientists in the United States continue to keep the totality of their lives integrated between the person whom they trust as their creator and Lord and their scientific inquiries with no fear that God will be in panic. This process helps science move forward and helps scientists ask the moral and ethical questions about what the impact of their discoveries will be.

Gilbert concludes:

in the end religion and science probably cannot be reconciled, if only because we do not really desire any such closure. Too much has been gained by maintaining their differences; too much would be lost in ending the struggle. I am persuaded that the constant interchange between these two supposed polarities constitutes a powerful element in mastering the challenges of cultural and social change. From

⁴¹ Charles Colson, "Reclaiming the Soul of Science," *Christianity Today*, August 1, 1995, <http://ctlibrary.com/14704>.

⁴² Jordan Lite, "Where's God in the Machine?" *Wired.com*, July, 24, 2000, <http://www.wired.com/news/technology/1,37692-0.html>.

⁴³ Ibid.

this conclusion, it is difficult not to suppose that one of the most creative impulses of American culture is the continuing presence of religion at the heart of scientific civilization.⁴⁴

This dialogue is very useful and necessary for both the scientific world and the church and ultimately for the benefit of society.

Economic Context

Over the years, Christians have hotly debated the relationship between religion and economic systems. Paul Johnson, a prominent British historian, in an article titled “Blessing Capitalism,” says “...there is no greater source of muddled thinking than the relationship between religion and economic systems. Throughout the 18th and 19th [sic] centuries, most churches [in Europe and the USA] established and free, Catholic and Protestant, condemned socialism root and branch. In the 20th century, most of them, to varying degrees, have condemned capitalism.”⁴⁵

In the middle of the twentieth century, Sir Fred Catherwood, a British member of the European Parliament, observed the rising of socialism across Europe and he also noted the uniqueness of the Protestant ethic regardless of the economic system. In his book, *The Christian in Industrial Society*, he stated:

Socialism may or may not be able to produce comparable prosperity. It is too early to say. If it does succeed it will probably be for different reasons, although non-Communist socialism does appear to require an even higher ethic than capitalism for its success. But the argument between communism, socialism and capitalism and their variations should not turn, for the Christian, on prosperity alone. The freedom of the individual is an even more important consideration. Capitalism may or may not be an unintended by-product of the Protestant ethic, but the ethic is much broader than capitalism or socialism and not to be confined to either.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Gilbert, 323.

⁴⁵ Paul Johnson, “Blessing Capitalism,” *Commentary* 95, no. 5 (May 1993): 3.

And, now in the early years of the twenty-first century socialism as it was expressed in the twentieth century has fallen. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, many former Eastern European countries became aligned with the European Union and began opening their economies to the global market. For 16 years, countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic have been open to western multinational companies to receive the economic boost that they lacked while behind the Iron Curtain of the former Soviet Union. That has stirred up debates like those Johnson talks about concerning the price these countries will have to pay to get ahead economically, to gain prosperity. The region of the Balkans also is looking to the United States and the EU for investment in their area, and Greece is one of the chief investors in the region of the former Yugoslavia.

Greece

Greece has come a long way in its move toward a free-market economy from the heavily socialistic approach that prevailed until around a decade ago, but any changes she has made toward free-market capitalism have been marked by great hesitation and trepidation. Previously, the economy of the country had been under heavy government control and spending that was counterproductive. Nicholas Gianaris, professor of economics at Fordham University, states that "especially in the 1980s, emphasis was given to government expenditures for social programs and employment of personnel that was not needed in the public sector. This policy led to large budget deficits and huge government debts (domestic and foreign). Moreover, the unwise policy of taking over

⁴⁶ Sir Fred Catherwood, *The Christian in Industrial Society* (London: Tyndale Press, 1966), 124-125.

private enterprises by the government made things worse."⁴⁷ In fact, this policy discouraged foreign investment and is reflected in the fact that Greece lags behind the other EU members in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Europe. Actually, according to a 2004 article on foreign policy, "Greece was the region's worst performer, falling from 26th to 28th place as trade deficits widened and inward FDI dropped off after two years of exceptionally high volumes, despite the run-up to the 2004 Olympic Games." ⁴⁸

Many of the changes have come as a result of Greece's entry into the European Union in 1982 and the need to comply with EU standards. More free-market-oriented policies have been implemented in the last decade than in the previous 50 years and the pace of change has accelerated since 2001. More changes will come in the future as the country works to meet EU standards. Susan Kahwati from Austrade, the Australian Trade Commission, notes:

since the late 1990s...the Greek Government, in line with EU requirements and recommendations, has made serious attempts at and inroads into the liberalisation [sic] and reform of the economy. During recent years, the primary aim of Greek economic policy has been stabilisation, [sic] as well as fighting (and subsequently reducing) the deficit in the current transaction balance. A large portion of the public sector has been or will be privatised, [sic] with priority being placed on telecommunications, banks, energy and other community services. ⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Nicholas V. Gianaris, *Geopolitical and Economic Changes in the Balkan Countries* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 55, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=24409063>.

⁴⁸ "Measuring Globalization: Economic Reversals, Forward Momentum," *Foreign Policy* 141: 1, March/April 2004, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5002089994>.

⁴⁹ Susan Kahwati, "Doors Open as Greece Gears Up for the Olympic Games," *Business Asia*, December 2001, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000936876>.

There still is reluctance to change to enhance economic development. Several factors ingrained in the Greek economic culture contribute to this resistance to change:

1. The historical influence of the government in managing business. As a legacy of the government's heavy role in business throughout the last century, there remains a heavy dependence on the government, which slows down privatization efforts.

In a study of Greek management style in an international study of business management, Dimitris Bourantas, professor at Athens University of Economics and Business, and Vassilis Papadakis, associate professor at Athens University of Economics and Business, found:

The underdevelopment of management in the public sector is to a large extent due to powerful political forces. Modern Greece is a relatively new democracy that bears painful memories from both world wars, from the civil war of 1944-49, and from the military dictatorship of 1967-1974. All of these events have strengthened the power of politicians over technocrat managers at least in the many state controlled enterprises. Even today, the top management of all major public enterprises is appointed by the government, and the key criteria for appointment are loyalty and contributions to the political party, rather than managerial competence.⁵⁰

Although a decade has past since this article was written, the country still tries to cut itself off from political appointments in positions that are decision makers for its economic welfare.

2. Fear of responsibility and a lack of political will. In their study, Bourantas and Papadakis found that while Greek managers prefer the participative form of management, "they simultaneously showed little faith in the other individual's capacity for leadership and initiative. Indeed, 'fear of responsibility' (in Greek--*euthynophobia*), is commonly used by Greek bosses to justify the lack of delegation of decision-making prerogatives to

⁵⁰ Dimitris Bourantas and Vassilis Papadakis, "Greek Management: Diagnosis and Prognosis," *International Studies of Management and Organization* 26, no. 3 (1996), <<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000453007>>, accessed August 27, 2005.

lower management.”⁵¹ In such a system, innovative thoughts are viewed with suspicion before they are even tried.

3. A state-dependent economy to which citizens make few contributions. In an article titled “The Greek Economy: Performance, Expectations, and Paradoxes,” Stavros Thomadakis, chairman of the Public Interest Oversight Board which is an international oversight body for setting auditing, ethics, and education standards for the accounting profession, points out a paradox that he says is a result of a state-dependent national economy that receives little or no contributions from private citizens. Until recently, Greeks were taxed under an arbitrary system that estimated the value of an individual’s property by the lifestyle the owner lived, and typically, Greeks did not bother to pay the assessed tax nor did the government bother to hold the property owner accountable. Plus, even if a citizen paid his taxes, he would see few results from his hard-earned dollars. Rarely could he point to specific projects that had been completed; often he could point to corruption and fraud. Thus, paradoxically, Thomadakis concludes that “Greeks are industrious, adjustable, and capable people, who thrive the world over as merchants, entrepreneurs, scholars, engineers, yet the Greek economy is not performing well...and in the context of widespread tax evasion and public deficits, one frequently hears that Greek citizens are rich whereas the Greek state is poor.”⁵²

4. The role of the Greek Orthodox Church. Not surprisingly, the Greek Church has been reluctant to embrace capitalism. A distaste for capitalism’s undercurrents of

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Stavros B. Thomadakis, “The Greek Economy: Performance, Expectations, and Paradoxes,” in *The Greek Paradox: Promise vs. Performance*, eds. Graham T. Allison and Kalypso Nickolaïdis (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 39-40.

consumerism and materialism coupled with the notion that these are by-products of the emerging global economy dominated by the West drives the Church's reluctance.

The Greek Church turns a critical eye to the Western Church and its relationship to capitalism and fears what might happen in Greece. The Greek Church believes the Western Church has been taken hostage by an economic system that caters to modern trends and thus compromises her message.

Reflecting these concerns, Emmanuel Clapsis, professor of systematic theology and dean of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology Office, refers to the consumer revolution of the West as a phenomenon that represents not just a change in tastes, preferences, and buying habits but also a fundamental cultural shift. It changed the Western concepts of time, space, society, the individual, the family, and the state.”⁵³ He goes on to cite the example of retailing analyst Victor Lebow who “notes that ‘our enormously productive economy...demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption... we need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at ever increasing rates.’”⁵⁴

Due to the prominence of the Western Church in America and Europe, Clapsis says the Greek Church also believes that when Western societies sacrifice nature and all its resources on the altar of economic advancement the Western Church does not intervene to speak out against the ills of materialism.⁵⁵

⁵³ Emmanuel Clapsis, “A Greek Orthodox Perspective” in *Consumption, Population, and Sustainability--Perspectives from Science and Religion*, eds. Audrey R. Chapman, Rodney L. Petersen, and Barbara Smith-Moran (Island Press; Washington, D.C., 2000), 148.

⁵⁴ Victor Lebow, as quoted in Clapsis, 149.

⁵⁵ Clapsis.

In response, in recent years the Orthodox patriarchate has launched a major campaign to speak through its leader, the ecumenical patriarch, on such contemporary issues as the protection of the environment and, in connection with that, the exploitation of nature for economic reasons. Bartholomew, the ecumenical patriarch, addressed ecological and economic positions on behalf of the Church, saying that “it has become painfully apparent that humanity, both individually and collectively, no longer receives the natural order as a sign and a sacrament of God but rather as an object of exploitation.... When we become sensitive to God’s world around us, we grow more conscious also of God’s world within us. Beginning to see nature as a work of God, we begin to see our own place as human beings within nature.”⁵⁶

5. A long-standing resistance among the populace to a free-market economy. Representative of the arguments many Greeks make against a free-market system are the comments made by journalist Mariana Pyrgiotis in the newspaper *Apogevmatini* in August 2005. Writing about the Greek conservative party (New Democracy) government’s lack of steps towards clearer and more assertive initiatives for a freer, open economy, she says:

the philosophy of the free economy in the marketplace is based on a continuously cyclical feeding movement of capital to and from the total population and not towards a single over concentration of wealth in the hands of the few with a parallel pauperization of the many... Now for Greece, where some things are misunderstood much more than the rest of Europe, like the word “profit” that tends to be identified with Antichrist, and the “666”... the meaning of “creative capitalism” is not even on the table of public dialogue because the second word, capitalism, causes allergic reaction even in the New Democracy party.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Mariana Pyrgiotis, “Wanted: Business Ethics,” *Apogevmatini*, August 3, 2003, 3.

And yet, in spite of resistance, there have been signs of change especially since 2000. Some examples are:

1. Changes in the income tax code. Under a new income and property tax system developed in consultation among others also with the American Internal Revenue Service, Greeks are learning how to report their income and assets accurately and then to pay taxes on what they earn rather than on what it seems they are worth. There are various methods for informing the citizens of changes and updates in the income tax code. An interactive web page of the Finance Ministry can be used for frequently asked questions as well as to learn the locations of local offices where people can voice their concerns.⁵⁸

2. A move toward a change in the attitude of public servants who now seek to serve citizens rather than intimidate them. In recent years, a new civil servants' code was enacted that introduced needed changes. According to the [European Industrial Relations Observatory](#), "new offences have been added, relating to civil servants' behavior and their obligation to provide citizens with necessary information. Refusal to provide citizens with information now is deemed to be a disciplinary offence and the Minister of the Interior has the right to exercise disciplinary power over civil servants and state entities for inappropriate behavior towards citizens, unjustified failure to serve citizens, failure to process their cases on time and refusal to cooperate with the Citizens' Service Centers."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Greece: Ministry of Economy and Finance for Inquiring Citizens Home Page, <http://www.mnec.gr/polites.aspx>.

⁵⁹ European Industrial Relations Observatory, <http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2006/06/articles/gr0606049i.html>.

3. Growth in the Gross Domestic Product. From 1993 to 2002, the GDP (gross domestic product) went from negative growth to a positive 4.1 percent, which for the fifth consecutive year was higher than that of the European Union average.⁶⁰

4. A move toward developing a more efficient public sector. Efforts are underway to hire and train workers with appropriate qualifications as well as to discontinue the age-old practice of filling positions with incompetent political party members.

The United States

History plays a key role in the differences in the American approach and the Greek approach to economics and in the interplay between religion and economic systems. In his book *Economics: The Basics*, Tony Cleaver of Durham Business School at Durham University in the United Kingdom, writes:

Economics has been described as the science of choice. In the face of limited resources, human society has evolved systems of decision-making that choose whose wants are to have priority, in what manner resources are to be exploited and whether--in the end--we make guns or bread and butter. Whichever decision-making system society employs, however, it is in the nature of economics that the answers it comes up with cannot please all of the people, all of the time. Because fundamental issues and disagreements are at stake here, they have excited the passions of humankind throughout history. Revolutions have erupted, wars have been won and lost and demonstrations continue to this day in various cities and nations of the world about the proper distribution, use and abuse of the fruits of the planet.⁶¹

One has, therefore, to look at the Greek Republic today after its struggle to survive long-term occupations by the likes of the Ottoman Empire, two World Wars, a Civil War, and a seven-year dictatorship as well as being a part of the Byzantine Empire

⁶⁰ "Greek Economy Improves Dramatically," *Xinhua News Agency*, editorial, December 5, 2000, 1.

⁶¹ Tony Cleaver, *Economics: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 2, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=107873859>.

with an economy that basically centered around the interests of the imperial power before and after the Ottomans took over. Even after gaining its independence from the Ottoman Empire, the new nation was established by the Great Powers as a monarchy fashioned after the western European monarchies and ruled by royal families from Germany and Denmark. Greece's turbulent history and long foreign occupation, according to Cleaver, has produced a very unstable climate for the economy and has pleased those who were in power far more than the common people.⁶²

The United States, on the other hand, began on the foundation of democratic rights for its citizens with no special class privileges. It has endured no war within its boundaries except the Civil War. The nation has enjoyed a long tenure of stability with minimum interference from government and with continued emphasis on fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of its citizens.

Greece and the United States-- two nations with very different histories and approaches to economic development--face today's global economy based on their journeys thus far.

To further understand the differences between the economic contexts of the United States and Greece, one must study the history of the two continents of North America and Europe. At the time the United States of America became a nation, the countries of Europe had existed for centuries under kings and monarchs and church-state institutions in which governments wielded a heavy hand in the daily lives of their citizens. Any new idea had to have the approval of too many people in authority and most often got bogged down by ingrained resistance to any change to the status quo.

⁶² Ibid.

In contrast, Johnson writes, when Europeans emigrated to the United States, their economic pursuits flourished in the less restrictive New World environment:

What seems to be true is that the progressive elements in a given society, which became identified with the capitalist system, were marked not by adherence to any particular doctrine but by antipathy to highly institutionalized and clericalized Christianity of any kind. The common characteristic of these entrepreneurs--whose religious feeling was often intense but essentially private and personal--was their desire to be left alone by religious enthusiasts and organizers, and to escape from the clericalist and canon-law network. They thus tended to emigrate, and it was the act of movement, from restrictive societies to more relaxed ones, which liberated their energies and ingenuity.⁶³

Essentially, the legal and civic structures in American society developed in such a way as to foster economic growth and free enterprise. The underpinning of this liberating environment was the fact that America was founded on a set of premises that guaranteed the individual the rights and freedoms endowed to him/her by the God of Christian scriptures. The late Christian thinker Francis Schaeffer explained that the reformers “with their strong emphasis on the Fall, ...understood that since every person is indeed a sinner there is a need for checks and balances especially on people in power.”⁶⁴ From its inception, the United States developed a system of checks and balances between the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary branches so that the government could protect individuals and their initiative and at the same time hold them accountable to handle freedom responsibly. The concomitant responsibility to God and society did not allow the individual the freedom to become a tyrant but rather to become a servant of both the individual and society. Those freedoms insured that Americans would have to deal with a

⁶³ Johnson, *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming-Revell Company, 1976), 112-113.

minimum of barriers to what they could do. That means less government interference in the daily affairs of its citizens.

In addition, as Johnson writes, “the United States, with its freedom from clericalism and canon-law, and its stress on moral as opposed to dogmatic theology, was the perfect setting for private as opposed to institutionalized religion to flourish, for the benefit of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews alike.”⁶⁵

While the climate of free enterprise and the attendant capitalistic system has served the United States well, there are inherent dangers:

1. Capitalism has no intrinsic moral values. It is like a well-oiled machine that can be used for good purposes or can become an exploitative instrument to devalue the very individuals that it could assist. Whether it is used for good or evil depends on the environment, says Johnson. He further writes:

In a godless society, lacking the systematic moral education which organized religion provides in families and schools, and the regular practice of religious duties, we are therefore bound to get the first kind of capitalism that John Paul and Neuhaus warn us [simply the recognition of the positive role of the business, private property, the responsibility for production and the creativity needed and no word for the individual who will work to make all of this happen]. To put it crudely, capitalism will tend to be bad if there is a predominance of bad capitalists.⁶⁶

There is no room for individuals to develop and benefit directly from their hard work if there is no protection of their rights and no clear indication of responsibilities within the moral framework in which the economic system functions.

2. The Christian in a capitalistic system either will impact the system with the gospel and make the system work within biblical parameters or the system will force

⁶⁵ Johnson, 33.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 34.

him/her to view the gospel through a “capitalistic filter” and be tempted to change biblical principles to fit the situation. Brian Griffiths, former head of policy development under Britain’s Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and current deputy chairman of Goldman Sachs International and a member of the British House of Lords, clearly cautions that when a Christian sees the benefits of efficiency in the capitalistic system

economic life has to be judged within a moral framework. Efficiency is not enough. It is not enough to say that such and such is necessary because that is how markets work, or that such a result is inevitable because that is an application of the principle of “the survival of the fittest”. Christianity is vitally concerned with morality and justice, and these are just as relevant to the economic sphere as to other spheres of life. In this area it is economic life which must be made to conform to Christian standards of justice, and not Christian principles which should be bent to serve an autonomous economic order. For example, a business decision must be capable of being defended on grounds of morality as well as profitability.⁶⁷

Thus, for Christian capitalists, the “machine” of capitalism as a vehicle for economic advancement can be mistaken for an instrument impacting the Christian message instead of being impacted by it. Therefore, Christians in the business world must pay careful attention to their objectives. The line between fulfilling their calling to Christ’s cause and working for the profit margin in the marketplace can be very thin and is easy to cross.

For example, in the United States the Christian music industry began as a means to give witness to the power of the gospel in the American entertainment industry and to reach the secular public with contemporary Christian music. Once a musician or a band becomes popular, however, things often change. Songwriter and guitarist Matt Slocum writes from his personal experience when he says that “with the huge commercial success

⁶⁷ Brian Griffiths, *The Creation of Wealth: A Christian’s Case for Capitalism* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1985), 110-111.

and being on a large major label, we found ourselves within certain parameters. We've become a pop band with a Christian underside.”⁶⁸

From the outset, there were tensions in the relationship between Christian music and fame, according to William Romanowski, professor of communication arts and sciences at Calvin College, who writes that “from the very beginning, the effort to create a demand for evangelical rock music committed the Christian music industry to the goals and strategies of the commercial marketplace--industrial growth, increased market share and greater profits. This, in turn, encouraged the popularization and dilution of the evangelical message necessary to build a large mass market.”⁶⁹

Contemporary music targeted to the secular public affected the local church as well. Soon many congregants wanted contemporary music rather than traditional church music in worship services. To them, it seemed an obvious means to reach the unchurched, secular American. But for some Christians, it seemed that the traditional message of the gospel was now subservient to popular culture; for them, it left the impression that the message had changed or at least that the church was compromising too much to engage the unchurched and discounted the contribution of contemporary music in reaching into the world. Mark Allan Powell, professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary and compiler of the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*, says “in the last 30 years, this phenomenon of contemporary Christian music has

⁶⁸ Matt Slocum and Leigh Nash, “The Discontent Between Business and Artistry,” *Christianity Today*, August 1, 2003, <http://ctlibrary.com/10497>.

⁶⁹ William D. Romanowski, “Evangelicals and Popular Music: The Contemporary Christian Music Industry,” in *Religion and Popular Culture in America*, eds. Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan (University of California Press; Berkley, 2000), 108.

been an important part of the history of Christianity in America. But I think the church and especially theologians and scholars have not paid adequate attention to it.”⁷⁰

A second example is when the Christian music industry ties spiritual health to profit. Romanowski claims “by its incessant promotion of media consumption, the contemporary gospel industry subtly affirmed American materialism as a guide to personal happiness. Evangelical CD’s, DVD’s, and videos often were advertised as solutions to family problems, parent-child conflicts, and adolescent struggles.”⁷¹

Religious-National Context

The national and political fabrics of both Greece and the United States are interwoven with rich historical religious threads that impact their national scenes even today. Greece with its long history that began with the Byzantine Empire and the United States as a relatively young nation founded on Judeo-Christian principles both have religious connections that influence the way they function in the global arena.

Understanding this is crucial for leaders of a Non-Governmental Organization for it can impact the organization’s ability to function successfully. Whether the mission of an NGO is economic or educational, the organization no doubt will have to address how political and religious attitudes color issues. Theodore Long, president of Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, explains that “religious prophecy seems to become entangled with politics almost inevitably. Unlike the administrators of society who operate as agents of established authority, prophets stand outside existing structures making claims

⁷⁰ Mark Allan Powell, “Don’t Knock Christian Rock,” *Christianity Today*, August 1, 2002, <http://www.ctlibrary.com/7041>.

⁷¹ Ibid., 121.

on behalf of transcendent powers. Whatever their content, prophetic claims raise the issue of social authority, creating opportunities for and stimulating action to transform or undermine existing regimes. By its very nature, religious prophecy appears to carry great political relevance."⁷² Therefore, leaders of any NGO need to have an adequate understanding of the politics and the voices of the prophets in the area it is seeking to serve. An NGO founded and functioning with biblical values stands in the gap between governments and other political entities with established systems in the marketplace and the voice of the people of God in the community of faith. Such an NGO then needs to be in a position to introduce those values and to be the voice, the “whistleblower,” that presents the biblical plum line showing where the standards ought to be as opposed to where they are. The manner in which this is accomplished is very important—never in an arrogant, or defiant manner, nor in a wimpy apologetic fashion. Sir Fred Catherwood says that:

We Christians find ourselves opposing two extremes. At one extreme are those who believe that the dark side of human nature can be restrained only by tough law and order; at the other are those who believe that human nature is essentially good, that social conditions are the root of all evils, and that Christians above all should be forgiving.

But while we can forgive someone who knocks us down and robs us, the law cannot; it must be just. Christians have to preach that crime deserves punishment, that right and wrong are absolute and not relative standards. But we must also remember that God has given all of us made in his image a conscience, a natural feeling for what is right and an idealism to which Christians can and should appeal and to which the world responds.

Even in a fallen world, people prefer truth to lies, prefer those who clearly care for them to those who despise them, those who give them a vision of a better

⁷² Theodore E. Long, "Prophecy, Charisma, and Politics: Reinterpreting the Weberian Thesis," in *Prophetic Religions and Politics: Religion and the Political Order*, eds. Jeffrey K. Hadden and Anson Shupe (New York: Paragon House, 1984), 3, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=57001319>.

way of life to those who offer no hope, and those whose own lives set an example to those whom they cannot respect.⁷³

Greece

Over the years, the tie between the national/political identity of Greece and the Greek Church has been tried and tested many times on many issues. There, however, is one undeniable certainty: the tie remains strong.

Theofanis Stavrou, professor of history at the University of Minnesota, writes about how Konstantinos Karamanlis, who was president of the Greek republic immediately after the 1967-1974 dictatorship, summed it up well when he said: “The nation (*ethnos*) and Orthodoxy...have become in the Greek conscience virtually synonymous concepts, which together constitute our Helleno-Christian civilization.”⁷⁴ While Karamanlis was instrumental in Greece’s entrance into the EU in 1982 and was crucially important for the democratization process, he was deeply aware of the strength of the relationship between the state and the Church.

Stavrou also quotes what George Theotokas, (1905-1966), another influential Greek scholar and social critic, wrote:

Orthodoxy, as the Greek people see it today, is a national religion, indissolubly woven with the customs and character of these people, the climate and fragrance of the country...its family life and the passing of the seasons.... It is impossible to conceive separation of church and state in Greece, neither has there developed here a political anticlerical movement as has taken place elsewhere. We criticize the church frequently--sometimes very sharply--but we do

⁷³ Sir Fred Catherwood, “The Christian and Politics,” in *God and Culture*, eds. D.A Carson and John D. Woodridge (Carlisle, Cumbria, England: Eerdmans Pub. Co. and Paternoster Press, 1993), 198.

⁷⁴ Konstantinos Karamanlis, as quoted by Theofanis G. Stavrou, “The Orthodox Church of Greece,” in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century, [Christianity Under Stress-Vol.1]*, ed. Pedro Ramet, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1988), 185.

so from within, as its members who expect from it to become better. We do not fight it as if it were an alien body from which we want to separate.⁷⁵

This remains true today. The union of the national and the religious self in the core of the Greek psyche affects how the Church functions in society. As Theotokas said, in Greece there is no separation of Church and state.

The irony, however, is that in spite of the influence of the Church on the state and society, it does not have the same degree of impact on domestic issues that affect the daily life of Greek citizens. Granted, the Church's voice has begun to be heard on such issues as the shift in views on the family, the trend of couples living together outside of marriage, the recent influx of eastern mystic religions, and the emerging public conversation regarding gay marriage in the local parishes. On the rare occasions, however, when Orthodox theologians appear on television with other Christian pastors of evangelical or Catholic background to deal with these topics, some of the Orthodox theologians do not see this as a way to present a united Christian front. Further, when they are confronted on those programs by professionals who present a united front in espousing modernistic secular views, those supporting the Orthodox point of view seem stuck in a power battle as to who is right and who is heretical. They focus on dogmatic differences rather than uniting with other Christians to clearly define biblical and practical principles that will help the audience. As noted previously in this thesis-project, only 20 percent of the Greek population attends church and most of those are older people. The challenge is to offer Greek young adults and young families assistance with the real issues with which they are trying to cope. Unfortunately, the Orthodox Church is reluctant to accept new approaches for dealing with the spiritual and social needs of the

⁷⁵ Ibid., 186.

faithful, much less the unchurched. Tradition trumps a desire to change. In reality, it is the government, not the Church that deals primarily with issues such as drug abuse or prison reform.

It should be noted that while a few evangelical churches are attempting to deal with social issues by using holistic, biblical approaches, their efforts are hardly noticed by the populace. Most of the efforts are initiated by parachurch organizations with whom local churches link. Evangelicals, after all, comprise less than 0.2 percent of the Greek population.⁷⁶

Thus, Greeks have grown accustomed to understanding the role of the Church as being that of a preserver of national values and as the institution that performs the religious rituals, functions, and festivals for individuals, families, and social institutions. The by-product of this image is that God is not seen as relevant to the difficult issues modern Greece faces. Thomas Idinopulos, professor of religion at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, makes an interesting point when he writes that most Greeks are interested more in the practice of the Christian religion and not much in its theology:

Today, I would say that not Christian theology but the Christian religion in its cultural context is what scholars want to know about and what students want to learn about. This does not mean that confessional beliefs, doctrines, and theological ideas are not relevant, but they are now put on the same footing as church festivals, ritual practices, and the ordinary day-to-day habits of faith that distinguish one Christian from another. I think this is a healthy development. When emphasis shifts away from what a Christian believes or does not believe, we can begin to understand the power and meaning of Christianity in a given culture, at a certain time. In other words, I should say that a better way to ascertain Christian belief is to focus on how Christians actually live their lives. I say this on the basis of years spent with Greek villagers who, when asked what they believe, can hardly answer in any precise way. But ask them how they would identify themselves as Greek Orthodox and you will hear a recital of ritual observances and traditional acts of faith that leave no doubt that their faith is not a matter of what is believed or thought about, but rather what is done or felt or

⁷⁶ Greek Evangelical Alliance Survey, 2004.

imagined. For such villagers the daily life of faith is not reducible to or equitable with a set of formal beliefs.⁷⁷

The director of the Institute agrees that a set of cognitive doctrinal beliefs is not effective for Christian believers if they do not know how they are applicable in their lives. This can be said of Christians, for example, who are knowledgeable of the scriptures and cannot or will not fit those truths into everyday life. This Institute director also agrees with Idinopulos' description that to a Greek villager being a Christian means a faith centered on the set of rituals, festivals, and functions significant for the community and its families. The point where the director of the Institute does not agree is when one gives the same weight to rituals and practice as to doctrinal knowledge and then lets that determine what constitutes Christian beliefs. This director believes that it is through the beliefs and theology contained in the scriptures that a person learns how to have a relationship with a personal God; these beliefs then are expressed in the rituals and functions of everyday life. The beliefs also are the mechanism for keeping those functions consistent and God-focused within this dynamic relationship. Otherwise the rituals and those other functions that make up "tradition" will be used to explain what constitutes the Christian faith rather than the guides in scripture. Christian faith, then, becomes primarily a subjective experience that varies from person to person.

A recent example of the distance between the Greek Church and society involved the state identification cards (ID). A major Greek newspaper BHMA (Vema) reported that in 2000 the government hired a research company to conduct secret research to take the pulse of the citizens as to whether or not to eliminate including religious affiliation on IDs. This is an important issue since the European Union views a person's religious

⁷⁷ Thomas A. Idinopulos, "What Is Religion?" *Cross Currents*, Fall 1998, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001375702>.

preference as personal and therefore not necessary on a state ID. According to the newspaper, the research showed the following: 54 percent thought including religious preference should be optional and 31 percent wanted it to be mandatory. Of those respondents who had completed university, 44 percent did not want religious preference mentioned on IDs, 69 percent did not feel their religious belief depends on the religious affiliation being stated on the ID, and only 29.2 percent said that it should be mandatory. For those who had completed high school, the numbers almost were reversed: 67.7 percent wanted religious affiliation on their IDs and 29.9 percent did not.⁷⁸

Highly educated Greeks seem to be disengaged from the ID issue, while the Church sees it as a threat to Greek traditions and values. So critical is the issue to the Church that she mounted a drive in 2000 to collect signatures for a national referendum to keep the religious affiliation on state IDs. In the BHMA survey, more than 52 percent deemed the Church's move excessive as she orchestrated massive protests in Athens, Thessaloniki, and other cities. By summer 2001, about three million signatures had been collected. Eventually, the government compromised by making listing the religious affiliation optional. The Church's involvement in the ID debate also reflects its perceived need to be involved in Greek civil affairs.

Greece's religious background and climate also colors its relationships with other European and Asian nations. According to Samuel Huntington from Harvard University, until 2004 Greece was the only Orthodox member nation of NATO and the EU. (Cyprus became the second predominantly Orthodox nation in the EU in 2004.) Greeks long have felt that because their country is next door to Turkey with its Islamic influence, they are

⁷⁸ Yiannis Lakopoulos, "Η απόρρητη έρευνα Σημίτη για την Εκκλησία" [Simitis' Secret Research for the Church] To BHMA, February, 7, 2000, Σελ.: Α04.

the “spear-carriers of Christianity.”⁷⁹ Yet, writes Samuel Huntington, “unlike Serbs, Romanians or Bulgarians, their history has been intimately entwined with that of the West. [Therefore,] Greece is also an anomaly, the Orthodox outsider in Western organizations.”⁸⁰ That feeling was captured by Greek scholar, author, and columnist Nikos Demou in his book *The Misfortune to Be a Greek* in which he raises the question of Greek identity. “Are we the Europeans of the East, or the Oriental of Europe? The progressive of the south or the underdeveloped of the north?”⁸¹ To a Greek, both sets of statements are true simultaneously.

Huntington says that Greece “has never been an easy member of either the EU or NATO and has had difficulty adapting itself to the principles and mores of the both.... Overall Greek foreign policies have assumed a heavily Orthodox orientation.”⁸² As to the future, Huntington says that Greece “will undoubtedly remain a formal member” of NATO and the EU. But he cautions that “as the process of cultural reconfiguration intensifies, however, those relationships also undoubtedly will become more tenuous, less meaningful, and more difficult for the parties involved. The Cold War antagonist of the Soviet Union is evolving into the post-Cold War ally of Russia.”⁸³

How all this plays out, especially in light of the growing threat of militant Islam, remains to be seen. Traditionally, Greece has been the friend of the Orthodox nations in

⁷⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1996), 162

⁸⁰ Ibid., 163.

⁸¹ Nikos Demou, “Η Δυστυχία του να είσαι Έλληνας” [The Misfortune To Be a Greek] (Athens: Nefeli, 1982), 36.

⁸² Huntington, 163.

⁸³ Ibid.

the Balkans. Indicative of that to the extreme was the consistent support of the Milosevic regime during the 1990s wars in Yugoslavia when Greece supported the Serbs in Bosnia. Takis Michas, a former senior advisor on media to the Greek government and an accomplished journalist, describes how Greece was the only EU nation that did not support United Nations sanctions but rather supported the Serbs, refusing to leave them isolated. He quotes a leading Serb journalist Peter Lucovic who said that “‘Greece's policies ...benefited exclusively the Milosevic regime, helping the Milosevic family and its associates to retain power in Belgrade. Greece was used by the Milosevic regime as the fine example of a Western country that supported democratic and patriotic Serbia.’”⁸⁴ The state Church also was a part of that movement. “The Church even invited indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic to visit Athens in the summer of 1993 in order to honor him at a rally in a stadium in Piraeus. Greek priests traveled regularly to war-ravaged Bosnia to provide spiritual succor to the Bosnian Serb army in Sarajevo, Zvornic and other places,” Michas wrote.⁸⁵

Greece not only relates well to the Orthodox countries of the Balkans but also is recognized as the one country among the 25-member nations of the EU that has a good opportunity to relate to the Arab world because of its long-standing relations with most of the Middle East and North African countries.

On both fronts, however, much depends on how the European Union develops. Kalypso Nikolaidis, an international relations expert, writing in *Foreign Affairs* magazine in 2004, said:

⁸⁴ Peter Lucovic, as quoted by Takis Michas in “America the Despised,” *The National Interest*, Spring 2002, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000742793>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

the EU will have to continue to relate to the rest of the world by upholding in outside relations the kind of pluralism, solidarity, and tolerance it strives to promote inside its own democracies. Its new foreign minister is more likely to succeed by focusing not on systematically giving the EU a 'single voice' but on avoiding cacophony among its members' contrapuntal notes. By encouraging flexible cooperation, the [EU] constitution suggests that it may be possible to devise a foreign policy adapted to the diverse wants of individual members. Agreeing to disagree and learning to live with differences are assets not only in transatlantic relations but also within the EU itself. Why deny that Greece is a better mediator with Arab countries, France with the French-speaking world, and the United Kingdom with the United States?⁸⁶

The importance of Greece not just for the Balkans but also for the Arab world was highlighted by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in a 2006 meeting with Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Theodora Bakoyannis. Secretary Rice said just because the United States and Greece are long-standing allies "doesn't mean that we always agree on every element concerning a particular problem. But it does mean that Greece and the United States, from the strongest possible basis of shared values, from our alliance in NATO, from the work that we are doing together in the Balkans, that we are now reaching past that to the broader Middle East where, as Dora [Bakoyannis] said, Greece has a long history of relations with the Muslim world and is therefore an anchor for any outreach to the Muslim world."⁸⁷

Ironically, while the tie between Church and state remains strong, Greeks do not hesitate to criticize the Church. In fact, some of the opinions expressed about the Church's influence are rather bleak. Stavrou says the Church has been transformed into "a socially impotent and politically neutral 'religious supplement' to human existence."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Kalypso Nikolaidis, "We the Peoples of Europe..." *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 6, 2004.

⁸⁷ Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks with Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Theodora Bakoyannis After Their Meeting," Washington, D.C., March 23, 2006, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/63724.htm>.

⁸⁸ Stavrou, 186.

He further alleges that “the administration of the church seems totally satisfied with its decorative role imposed upon it...satisfied with its accommodating mission as a state agency servicing the religious needs of the people. In exchange for this convenient *aphasia* [the church] enjoys the economic support and typical customary honors provided by the state.”⁸⁹

The United States

In the United States, the constitution prohibits a state church. According to the first amendment of the Bill of Rights: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”⁹⁰ The government does not adopt or make religion become a government-sponsored affair.

The church in America, however, does have the constitutional freedom to play an active role in American society. The constitution guarantees the church the right to speak out and influence society from its base of Judeo-Christian values, but it does not allow the church to legislate decisions nor to interfere with the government’s function.

And while the framers of the U.S. constitution desired to keep the government out of the affairs of the church, today their intent is interpreted by many Americans as an absolute wall between church and state. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black interpreted Jefferson to mean “the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ The U.S. Constitution On Line: http://www.usconstitution.netusconst_AM1.html.

erect "a wall of separation between church and State." [sic]⁹¹ Therefore, the so-called "Establishment Clause" is used today to keep religion out of the arena of the government and public life.

Writing about church-state issues, Lynn Buzzard, dean of the Hangdong International Law School in Korea and former executive director of the Christian Legal Society, claims that "most of the questions in the constitutional arena today are not Establishment Clause cases about how much the government can side with the Christians but really crucial questions about what limits exist against governmental intrusion, regulation, and witness."⁹² In the United States the notion is that "life can be divided into the sacred and the secular. It has been used to separate not simply the institutions of church and state, but to encourage and advocate the separation of religion, society, and the separation of moral viewpoints and culture."⁹³

This artificial separation between the secular and the sacred has led the church to withdraw from addressing many issues it once held in its domain. Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, says that in her history the American church has moved between extremes. He writes: "In the twentieth century, the debate has produced wide swings among conservative Christians between the extremes of isolationism and political accommodationism. In the early decades, believers were buffeted by the winds of theological modernism (with its social gospel), humiliated by the Scopes trial, and finally

⁹¹ Hugo Black, "U. S. Supreme Court, *Everson v. Board of Education*, 1947," as quoted by John M. Swomley, Jr., in *Religion, The State, & The Schools* (New York: Pegasus, 1968), pp. 21-22.

⁹² Lynn R. Buzzard, "Separation of Church State, and Religious Freedom," in *The Rights and Responsibilities of Dual Citizenship*, eds. Richard D. Land and Louis A. Moore (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 35.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 38.

retreated into fundamentalist enclaves to create a parallel culture through their churches and schools.”⁹⁴ During that time, spurred on by burgeoning specialization in an increasingly technical society, Americans turned to the government for help with many things that once were the domain of the church. Specialists such as psychologists, social scientists, and public policy makers now are expected to handle social issues such as dysfunctional families and poverty. Meanwhile, the church turned to spiritual matters, which has resulted in diminished influence in the public square.

The American evangelical church in particular has been divided in its response to the massive technological and societal changes that have occurred over the last forty years. Evangelicals have not spoken with one voice on how to deal with the issues and how to deal with the government that also was trying to deal with the same issues, albeit with a political agenda. Some in the evangelical camp identified themselves as conservatives with an allegiance to political conservatism. Colson continues:

thus was born the so-called Religious Right, which did fall prey to some of the excesses Cal Thomas and Ed Dobson diagnose in *Blinded by Might*. Enormous effort went into raising funds and garnering votes often with extravagant promises to "save America" if we would just elect the right candidates and pass the right bills. At the time I created consternation among my conservative friends by warning that the church stood in danger of succumbing to the political illusion and allowing the gospel to be taken hostage to a political agenda. Much of the political rhetoric smacked of triumphalism. "We were on our way to changing America," Thomas and Dobson write. "We had the power to right every wrong and cure every ill." In short, at its worst, the Religious Right was a mirror image of the secular Left.⁹⁵

This approach led other evangelicals to see them as close collaborators with the politicians, serving the political agendas of the party--that is, to secure votes in elections--

⁹⁴ Charles Colson, "What's Right About the Religious Right," *Christianity Today*, September 6, 1999, <http://ctlibrary.com/2533>.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

and as having little meaningful transforming impact on society. Colson again advises that “the church can and should address moral issues (yes, from the pulpit), but it should never make partisan endorsements. It must not allow itself to be seduced by political power something I saw all too often when I was in the White House. The church must guard its prophetic stance, leaving direct political activism to individual believers.”⁹⁶ After several election cycles in which Christian concerns were dropped from party platforms at the last minute, some evangelical leaders began to get the idea that their party connections were not working. This led some to be disheartened about involvement in the public arena. It also causes division in the body of Christ in America.

Actually, according to Colson, “the church can play a crucial role in restoring a culture mired in the anomie of postmodernism. Instead of being polarized by polemics, Christians ought to be charitable toward one another, constantly seeking common ground to work together in helping the church bring renewal to all the structures of God's creation.”⁹⁷

Non-Governmental Organizations⁹⁸

Writing in 1989, Economist Kenneth Boulding said that “the rise of international non-governmental organizations [is] perhaps one of the most spectacular developments of the twentieth century, although it has happened so quickly that it is seldom noticed.”⁹⁹ When the Young Women’s Christian Association was founded in 1894 as what can

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ See Appendix 6 for review of certain types of NGOs.

⁹⁹ Kenneth Boulding, as quoted by Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 159, ><http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=105855620>>, accessed January 10, 2006.

arguably be called the first NGO, no one could have imagined the impact such organizations would have.¹⁰⁰

According to the “Non-Governmental Organizations Research Guide” from Duke University, what began at the turn of the nineteenth century has mushroomed to the point where:

NGOs have become major players in the field of international development. Since the mid-1970s, the NGO sector in both developed and developing countries has experienced exponential growth. From 1970 to 1985 total development aid disbursed by international NGOs increased ten-fold. In 1992 international NGOs channelled over \$7.6 billion of aid to developing countries. It is now estimated that over 15 percent of total overseas development aid is channelled through NGOs. While statistics about global numbers of NGOs are notoriously incomplete, it is currently estimated that there is somewhere between 6,000 and 30,000 national NGOs in developing countries.¹⁰¹

For the purposes of this thesis-project, the term “Non-Governmental Organization” is used to describe any non-profit organization that is not operated by the government--local, state, or federal--in the United States or overseas. The term includes but is not limited to those organizations that are certified as NGOs by governments in order to receive some specific monetary assistance. The NGOs described in this thesis-project are non-profit and tax exempt. They receive operating funds from private donations and from public funds, when appropriate. They rely heavily on volunteers for their work force.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 17.

¹⁰¹ Public Documents and Maps Department, “Non-Governmental Research Guide” Duke University Perkins Library website: <http://docs.lib.duke.edu/igo/guides/ngo/define.htm>.

¹⁰² World Bank website “Nongovernmental Organizations and Civil Society/Overview,” <http://ln0018.worldbank.org/essd/essd/NGOshome>, accessed June 8, 2001, site available through website: Public Documents and Maps Dept. “Non-Governmental Organizations Research Guide” Duke University Perkins Library website <http://docs.lib.duke.edu/igo/guides/ngo/define.htm>.

Christian-Based Non-Governmental Organizations

Christian NGOs often begin out of a concern for the physical welfare of people with immediate needs resulting from tragedies, famines, tsunamis, or earthquakes. Some start with a focus on people's souls as a way to share God's love. Most start with love as a powerful ingredient. Samuel Hugh Moffett, emeritus professor of ecumenics and missions at Princeton Seminary, states:

Of course, love, as described in the New Testament, is fundamental, still the first and greatest commandment. Love began the mission: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have everlasting life.' Love was the motivation of God the Father. But what was the motivation of God the Son? The Son surely came on his mission with no less love than that of the Father. However, it is interesting to note that the Bible does not say so. Although the life of Jesus on this earth was undeniably filled with unbounded love and compassion, we are not told that he came into the world because he loved it. Insofar as the Bible distinguishes between the Son and the Father in reference to the mission, it tells us that the Father founds the mission motivated by love, while the Son goes on the mission motivated by obedience.¹⁰³

The explosion of NGOs coupled with the rise in globalization has resulted in an unprecedented opportunity to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ around the world. In a review of the book *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions*, John Cragin, a professor of business at the Paul Dickinson School of Business at Oklahoma Baptist University, says that the authors believe globalization "may have the same gospel-disseminating effect in the beginning of the third millennium that persecution had in the first millennium, and that exploration and colonization had in the second...powerful forces of worldwide material and financial interdependence--commonly called *globalization*--have created unprecedented opportunities for taking the

¹⁰³ Samuel Hugh Moffett, "Why We Go--Recapturing Our Motivation for Missions," *Christianity Today*, November 14, 1994, <http://www.ctlibrary.com/ct/1994/november14/4td053.html>.

message of the Cross to all nations, tribes, and tongues”¹⁰⁴ (For examples of Christian-based NGOs, see appendix 6).

This is especially pertinent to this thesis-project since the focus of this project is an NGO that operates on biblical principles. Two observations are in order at the outset regarding the Interbalkan Institute as an NGO:

1. In chapter two of this thesis-project the director of the Institute addressed the issue of whether an NGO can have and/or needs to have a theological position. In a nutshell, the director’s position is that if an NGO is to be a Christian missional institution, it must operate under certain basic theological assumptions that are relevant, contextual, and scripturally sound for the work at hand. Cannon Chris Sugden, executive director of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, points to the importance of developing theology not just as an academic exercise but also in the context of what God is asking his people to do, his mission. In fact, Sugden defines “mission as the mother of theology: that the critical work that theology needs to do is set by the questions that are posed to Christian scripture and tradition as a result of obedience to Christ and the gospel in engagement with the world.”¹⁰⁵ Pursuant to that premise, the mission statement of the Institute was developed out of the director’s God-given call to start this particular NGO. And while the Institute’s mission statement does not specifically mention a biblical/Christian base, (because its services are not religious or spiritual) its members do operate under parameters set in biblical values. Because of the segmentation of life into secular and

¹⁰⁴ John Cragin, “The Missions of Business: What Can Happen When Entrepreneurs Think They are Missionaries First,” a review of *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions* by Steven L. Rundle and Tom Steffen, *Christianity Today* 48, no. 4, April 2004: 103.

¹⁰⁵ Christ Sugden, “Mission Leadership and Christian Theological Research,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 28, no. 3, 2004: 232.

sacred in Greece, any mention of religious terminology will stereotype the organization as religious, thus negatively affecting its credibility and hampering its ability to function as a business education entity (For the Institute's mission statement, see appendix 1).

2. The work carried out through the Institute is a service to the business and educational community of Greece, which for the purposes of this thesis focuses on the business communities of Katerini and Thessaloniki, two cities in northern Greece. Advertising promises that participants will receive the very best expertise and seminars on business topics that the Institute can offer. In the context of Greece, the businesspeople expect to receive assistance and training knowing the values on which the Institute operates (For the Institute's values, see appendix 1). What is advertised as seminar content is what the participants receive. The spiritual component emerges as instructors share their own faith stories about how they apply biblical principles in their everyday and business lives and in dialogue between instructors and participants. It also continues after the seminars end as Institute personnel maintain contact with the Greek businesspeople, dialoging with and living among them.

As examined in chapter two, the operative premise for the business education work of the Institute is that for the Christian business man or woman, one's work is to be done with excellence, responsibility and as unto the Lord in the same fashion as a Christian educator or a Christian doctor would function.

Summary

Like a teen seeking to forge an identity, modern Greece is seeking to find its place in a new world. For the last three decades, the nation with a three-millennium-history, a largely homogeneous population, and a history of foreign occupation, world wars, civil

war, and a dictatorship has been trying to make its way as a member of the European Union and the newly-remade Balkan region. Greece's ancient, powerful past as a foundation stone in Western civilization is highly intertwined with its religious Orthodox present as the Church seeks to preserve its national identity and with it, its historical role as the state Church.

On the economic front, the Greek economy has its roots in imperial and feudal systems that were counterproductive and heavy top-down bureaucracies in which individuals had limited opportunities to use their God-given abilities and to pursue their goals. The historical influence of the government in managing the business sector and the fear of delegating responsibility coupled with a lack of political will has produced a state-dependent economy to which citizens make few contributions. Added to that is the fact that the Greek Church has been reluctant to embrace capitalism. A distaste for capitalism's undercurrents of consumerism and materialism coupled with the notion that these are by-products of the emerging global economy dominated by the West drives the Church's reluctance. As a result, in Greece there is a long-standing resistance among the populace to a free-market economy.

This union of the national self and the religious self in the core of the Greek psyche affects how the Church functions in society and how the individual sees the role of the Church in his/her personal life. For the Church, tradition trumps a desire to change. For most individuals, Church rituals and traditions are the sum total of their understanding of and experience with the Church; they do not think in terms of theology and practical Christian teachings.

All this is in sharp contrast to the United States with her relatively peaceful 230-year history and constitution-guaranteed principles of freedom and individuality, separation of church and state, and opportunities for free enterprise. And in the Christian realm, American evangelical Christians generally teach a theology grounded in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ resulting in a practical theology of living by biblical principles in every area of one's life.

Given these issues, there is no doubt that Greece needs help if she is to be successful in the new realities of Europe, the Balkans, and the global marketplace. And Greek Christian businessmen and businesswomen need help in understanding and implementing biblical principles into their personal and business lives.

At first glance, the stark contrast between the Greek and American historical, cultural, economic, religious, and political settings may seem to be an obstacle to any plan to utilize American business people to lead business education and training efforts in Greece. On further study, however, one can see that even obvious differences can become the basis for a rich exchange of ideas and information. In Greece, Americans can share much-needed technical "know-how" and at the same time experience a world with a definite Eastern flavour but with its foot in the West as well. They may come to a new appreciation of tradition as well as how to deal with it. After all, how one handles tradition affects how one handles one's business, including the willingness to take risks. From their American counterparts, Greek Christian business people also can learn how to live out their faith in the practical, everyday issues of life; nominal Christians can discover the practicality of the Christian faith and how it can become an integral part of their lives.

Christian businesspeople need to see their work as their Christian calling; through work, they can earn a living as well as be a witness of the joy God provides in the totality of life. As Christians accept this responsibility, their lives will become windows for their business associates to see Christ.

For the purposes of this thesis-project, this literature review reveals:

1. The paradoxical setting in which Greek businessmen and businesswomen live and work.
2. The conflicting attitudes in Greece toward free enterprise and government management of business.
3. The need in Greece for teaching about and modelling business ethics in the marketplace and in daily living.
4. The potential positive impact of such teaching and modelling on the future of Greece as well as in the lives of individuals.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter includes the genesis of the project, the project design, and the project implementation.

Genesis of the Thesis-Project

In December 2003, the author of this study and his wife moved from Boston, Massachusetts, to Katerini, Greece, the place of their birth, to begin the Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development. The idea for the Institute had come as an outgrowth of a partnership in 1994 between evangelical churches in Greece and some leaders of Southern Baptist work in New England. An exploratory trip to Greece by representatives of New England Baptists made apparent the many opportunities to encourage church members in both countries. Meanwhile, the Greater Boston Baptist Association (GBBA) and the Baptist Convention of New England (BCNE) had formed a partnership with the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) in order for churches affiliated with each of those entities to develop ministry relationships. It seemed natural for the KBC to become a partner as well. Every year since, individuals and groups from New England and Kentucky have gone to Greece to minister alongside local evangelical congregations.

Businesspeople were among the first from the New England/Kentucky volunteers who visited Greece. In Greece, as they interacted with businesspeople in the city of

Katerini in northern Greece, relationships developed. Katerini businessmen and women, both evangelical and Orthodox, began to ask the American businesspeople for their ideas about how to deal with the challenges that Greece faces as a new member of the European Union. Informal discussions continued over the years. During the same time period, on his many trips to Greece the author of this study followed up on the conversations in order to maintain an ongoing dialogue. Dialogue also developed between the author of this study and Greek Christian businesspeople in the Katerini area about their relationship to the marketplace. The businesspeople expressed their concern about the great gap they were experiencing between their faith and their marketplace agendas. Questions such as these arose: How does one integrate God's principles for how a believer should live into one's work life? Is the calling to do a job the same as a minister's call? How can that be possible? The need to pursue a more formal way of connecting lay businesspeople from America with businesspeople and entities in Greece became increasingly evident.

On many of their trips, some of the Americans who held leadership positions in such local business entities as chambers of commerce visited their counterparts in Katerini and even held formal meetings with committees of the local chamber to discuss issues of mutual interest. From those meetings numerous ideas emerged of possible ways U.S. businesspeople could assist the business community in Katerini. Meetings also were held with Greek government officials from the prefecture (province) and the local municipality of Katerini in order to keep the local officials informed.

These informal discussions revealed many issues of mutual concern as well as the need for a vehicle to carry those discussions further and to find a way to move to a more

formalized stage of developing projects that could bring together resources to address specific issues that had been raised over the past few years.

Some of the issues that emerged from the informal discussions revealed the need:

1. To interact with American business people in order to address the issue of free market economy in the age of globalization. In Greece, free market economy has a negative image because of the country's previous 20 years under socialism and government control of the marketplace. Therefore, a better understanding of the nature of globalization and how the free market economy functions within it is needed.

2. To understand how the free market economy affects a local economy and what can be done about it. The Greeks desired to learn how their U.S. counterparts function in the long-standing free market economy of the U.S. They wanted to know how to work constructively in the current Greek economic climate rather than just react to it.

3. To develop business education training that will help local businesspeople deal with here-and-now practicalities and also not be paralyzed about the future.

Soon, a suggestion emerged from both Greek business people and their U.S. counterparts that an entity be formed that could address these issues more formally. At that point the author of this study began to explore the next step and how he could be involved.

In 2002, the author of this study and his wife determined that God wanted them to move back to Greece after having lived in the United States for 35 years. Leaving Boston at the peak of their careers was not an easy decision. They found comfort in this passage from Nehemiah: “O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant

success today by granting him favour in the presence of this man.’ I was cupbearer to the king.”¹ It was indeed intimidating to leave the United States and the known and the comfortable in order to pursue the unknown and the risky. The business world whether in America or Greece was an alien world and the move to working with the business world was made even more intimidating with the addition of re-entering the Greek culture after such a lengthy absence. He found comfort in the fact that Nehemiah knew about wines, but he was no architect; he was going back to the land of his fathers, but he was more accustomed to his established spot in his adopted land. And like, Nehemiah, he knew he needed to ask God’s protection for this new endeavour.

Upon his arrival in Greece in December 2003, one of the first priorities for the author of this study was to know and be known in the local Katerini business community. In some respects, he was ahead of the game. As a native of Katerini with a large extended family living there and as one who had made repeated trips back to the area over the last 10 years, he was not an unknown. On those trips, he had worked to maintain old relationships and develop new ones with some key individuals in the community. Additionally, moving back to Greece after 35 years in the United States afforded the director of the Institute the opportunity to network and build bridges between American and Greek businessmen based on his knowledge of and experience with the nuances of both cultures.

He also was keenly aware that as he launched an organization the likes of which did not exist in the country of Greece, he was setting a standard. And as a Christian, he was keenly aware that he needed a sound biblical and theological grounding as well as a good grip of the history of the setting in which the Institute would operate. On this issue,

¹ Neh 1.11, New International Version (NIV)

Ray Bakke, an urban missiologist, says: “the further one goes into the avant-garde frontier of creative ministry, the more important it becomes that we be deeply rooted in the biblical, theological and historical tradition. We need deep roots to survive in urban ministry.”²

Legal issues had to be addressed as well. He began the process for establishing the legal entity known as the Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development as a Greek institution operating under Greek laws for non-profit organizations and registered in the local court. It is a non-profit and non-governmental organization. It was registered in 2004.

He then actively sought opportunities to raise the public profile of the Institute. Once the Institute was legally registered, he sought membership in appropriate organizations such as chambers of commerce in the region. He also listed the Institute as an educational entity for businesses in business telephone catalogs and merchants associations lists.

Additionally, he began to build relationships with people in a variety of media who were looking for business-related stories for on-air interviews or for newspaper or magazine articles. He knew that once the Institute was operational, he would be able to provide sources from the United States for the interviews. This not only would introduce the local business community to the Institute but would open the door for publicizing the work of the Institute in the future, thus fostering a positive climate for any upcoming endeavors.

Simultaneously with securing the necessary legal status and raising the profile of the Institute in the community, he began the process of locating organizations in the

² Ray Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 27.

United States that provide curriculum for international business training and began the search for potential instructors.

Two key factors guided the choice of curriculum: (1) The material had to be written such that it would require a relatively short preparation time for instructors and it had to be possible for instructors to add their own experiences. (2) The material had to be written such that it could be presented to those with formal higher education in business who would take the Institute seminars as refresher courses as well as to those with no university level education. Under it all was the assumption that the body of knowledge would be practical and provide ways participants could apply principles in their own business.

The search for instructors began with organizations in the United States and Europe that provide fellowship opportunities for business people who are believers and that provide Bible discussion material for them to use in their marketplaces.

The study sought these qualifications in instructors:

1. The ability to handle the subject matter well and to present the subject matter effectively in a cross-cultural manner. International teaching experience was preferable. Instructors needed to be comfortable with making the subject matter practical and relevant to the Greek setting. They also needed to be comfortable with the context from which the Greek students would come. For example, most of the Greeks would be from small-business backgrounds and not multinational corporations, and instructors needed to relate to them accordingly.

2. Flexibility. In the Greek setting, it is not unusual for seminars to be cancelled, changed, or modified, and instructors need to be ready to shift into a different mode of interacting with the audience.

3. The ability and readiness to share one's Christian testimony in ways that connect with the local people. An instructor's demeanour must be that of a servant, not an expert, with a vulnerable and transparent spirit. This is especially crucial in a region where traditionally those who teach or train remain distant from their students and where the expectation is that the students are to serve the teacher and the teacher is under no obligation to accommodate the students.

4. The ability to be both a mentor and a learner. This is crucial in helping participants to feel comfortable with discussing more than surface issues.

5. A person of prayer with an active prayer support system before, during, and after the project.

Design of the Thesis-Project

In the launch of a new organization, pilot projects provide a method for testing possible approaches for meeting specific needs of the community in which the organization plans to work. Clearly defined expectations can be tested in the context of real-life situations. The study developed pilot projects utilizing business seminars to address specific needs in northern Greece.

Pilot Projects

The pilot projects of the Institute included two types of seminars:

1. A two-hour seminar led by a business consultant who made a presentation in several locations to different audiences in the local business community. This gave the Institute the opportunity to reach a large number of people in diverse settings and to speak to their expressed needs. It also created a broader exposure in the community for the work of the Institute and introduced the community to the Institute's facilitating role in providing relevant training and education.

After each presentation, the names of those who indicated a desire to know more about the Institute's activities were placed on a mailing list. They would receive information about future events.

Using this schedule allowed much flexibility. With only one or two major presentations on his schedule, the consultant could spend the remainder of his time meeting one-on-one with interested businesspeople and making other contacts. This opened many natural opportunities for the consultant to share how the principles he had discussed in his presentations integrate with his faith. Thus he was able to share the role of God in his life.

2. A week-long seminar with a specific curriculum offered in a classroom setting to a limited number of people who were willing to dedicate several hours to the task. Participants interacted with the instructor and read and discussed material from a workbook that had been translated from English into Greek.

Prior to these pilot projects, appropriate agencies connected with the local business community were contacted to ascertain specific needs that the projects could address and to arrange speaking engagements for the U.S. business leaders.

Instructors also received information about the local area, the Chamber of Commerce, and the business people who would be participating in their seminars. They were given their seminar topic as well. If they planned to use their own material such as a workbook, PowerPoint presentation, charts, etc., then they were asked to send these to the Institute at least two months in advance of the seminar date for translation and printing.

The dates for the seminars were arranged to fit both the schedule of the local business community and that of the instructor or consultant. The Institute worked in coordination with the network of the local Chamber of Commerce and the Greek American Chamber of Commerce to secure locations and advertise the events. The chambers were responsible for developing a list of potential participants and for registering participants. At the end of the seminars, the participants in the week-long event evaluated the course (For a copy of the written evaluation form, see appendix 4) and the instructors talked with the Institute about their evaluation of their role. The participants chose to discuss orally the questions on the evaluation form rather than complete a written evaluation.

Expectations

The expectations for the pilot projects were these:

1. The two-hour seminar would be open to a broad audience and would cover a topic chosen by one of the sponsoring agencies. The instructor would be recruited by the Institute. The seminar presentation itself would be no longer than two hours and would be

followed by dialogue with the instructor and those who wished to participate. Faith issues would be integrated into the presentation and dialogue as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

2. The week-long seminar would be an intensive course on a specific aspect of business and would involve a small number of participants. The week-long format would afford the opportunity to exchange ideas and stories at a deeper level than the two-hour seminar. Faith issues would be integrated in the presentation and dialogue as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

3. Seminars would create opportunities for further connections for the Institute to offer its services.

4. Seminars would provide opportunities for volunteer businesspeople from the United States to be involved in a short-term mission (STM) project by using their talents to help others and at the same time extend the Kingdom of God in another part of the world as they build bridges to businesspeople in the Katerini area. In the case of the four week- long seminars, the four instructors will come from a single church congregation in the States, each for a one-week period. As each follows the other, dynamics crucial to the life of that particular congregation will be created and a significant missiological process will occur. This process accomplishes two important things: It fosters human connectedness by (1) building “bonding capital” and (2) building “bridging capital.” As referenced in chapter 2 of this thesis-project, “human connectedness as social capital” is differentiated into “bonding capital” and “bridging capital.” The first deals with connectedness within a social grouping while the second is about connecting between

different social groups.³ Kurt Ver Beek, sociology professor at Calvin College and director of the school's program in Honduras, further emphasizes the importance of continuity of contact of a short-term mission group with the local people as well as the significance of developing bonding among the local people who participated in the project:

For this sort of social bridges and linking to become strong and lasting, we must create structures and expectations that push the participants to see the STM experience as only one part of a larger commitment to learn more, pray more, give more, and do more for the families, church, community, and country they visited....Finally,...we should be concerned about the social bonding that takes place between the community members receiving the STM group....If community members feel empowered, to do good work together, and if the STM group helped them to see their own strengths and abilities-then they will likely keep doing exciting work on their own.⁴

5. American believer businesspeople will be encouragers to their Greek counterparts.

Implementation of the Project

This section will focus on the foundational aspects of the Institute--its mission; vision; purpose; goals and objectives; and values. It will also include the launch of the Institute and the pilot projects.

Foundations

The Institute needs an identity that separates it from other institutions and expresses the way it will relate to them. The mission, the vision, the purpose, the goals

³ Robert Priest, "Who Gets 'Socially Rich' from Short-Term Missions?" posted e-mail conversation between Robert Priest and Kurt Ver Beek, *Christianity Today* website: <http://www.ctlibrary.com/ct/2005/julyweb-only/52.0.html>, July 8, 2005.

⁴ Kurt Ver Beek, "Who Gets 'Socially Rich' from Short-Term Missions?" posted e-mail conversation between Robert Priest and Kurt Ver Beek, *Christianity Today* website, July 8, 2005.

and objectives, and the values of the Institute are the building blocks of that identity.

They also set the parameters for the manner in which the Institute will function and relate to the community and other relevant organizations.

Mission

“Hope for the Balkans one person at a time” is the motto of the Institute. This task is overwhelming, but the Institute does not act alone. Neither is it the only effort, nor can it influence the masses. Jesus set the ultimate example as he dealt with the multitudes one person at a time. It is the concentric circle concept come-to-life as one person’s influence radiates out to the lives of others in his/her network--and their influence to others, and on and on. *“Hope for the Balkans one person at a time”* will happen as people are touched one-by-one, and as they, in turn, influence others.

Additionally, changes in such things as education and the economy do not happen overnight. Change calls for perseverance and following the daily path that God lays out for his followers.

Vision

The vision for the Institute focuses on assisting in achieving stability in the region by fostering peace networks as the component necessary to welcoming growth and fostering the development of healthy relationships. The Institute seeks to provide the societal shock absorbers necessary to swallow the shock waves of the kingdom of darkness and allow a transition towards the Kingdom of light.

Purpose

The purpose of the Institute is to generate catalytically as many networks and contacts as possible among people in the educational, economic, cultural, and reconciliatory spheres for the advancement of the Kingdom of God and its principles.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the Institute revolve around four components of development and networking:

1. The educational component--to focus on building relationships between Christian academic institutions and faculty in the United States and educational organizations in Greece and throughout the Balkans for the purpose of cross cultural exchanges, offering courses in the region, and facilitating educational programs that assist in the improvement of the business market.
2. The economic component--to emphasize business education training offered through a variety of methods and settings for the purpose of developing the economies in the region. The Institute also seeks to promote values and ethics consistent with biblical principles by enlisting as teachers businessmen who are committed believers.
3. The electronic commerce component--to facilitate the creation of electronic commerce for local business communities as their introduction to the global market.
4. The reconciliation component--to facilitate and encourage reconciliation networks through which people from a variety of backgrounds can communicate and find points of cooperation in a region that has been ravaged by wars and hatred. The economic and the educational components will contribute towards reconciliation efforts by bringing people together to work and learn.

Values

The work of the Institute will be characterized by certain values that impact its efforts and are designed to keep it functioning properly and effectively. They are the prioritizing agents so that out of the multitude of good things that can be done, the best will be chosen and achieved by the grace of God.

The values of the Institute are:

1. Focus on purpose. The primary work of the Institute is to focus on its catalytic role. For example, the Institute will not establish its own extension campus in the region but rather will help any interested college or university work to that end in consultation with local authorities. It will attempt to promote partnerships among other institutions and then help sustain them. The forming of partnerships is a new endeavor for Greece. Dimitrakopoulos, from the School of Politics and Sociology, Birkbeck, University of London; and Passas, Assistant Professor in Public Administration and European Integration, Department of Law, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences of Athens, write that in Greece “the principle of ‘partnership’ was introduced in 1988 and it entailed the close co-operation of the relevant European, national, regional and local authorities. It was expanded in 1993 to include ‘social and economic partners’ and later in 1999 with the inclusion of NGOs.”⁵ Thus, the experience with agencies such as the Institute is only seven years in the making.

2. Integrity. The Institute and its constituents will work with integrity in order to be effective Christian witnesses in the marketplace. Truthfulness about the conditions of a business, the limitations of what can be delivered, and the way it interacts with other

⁵ Dionyssis G. Dimitrakopoulos and Argyris G. Passas, eds., *Greece in the European Union* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 47.

businesspeople is vital if local people are to have a clear picture of the Institute and its goals in a setting that traditionally is steeped in ambiguity and confusion. Integrity also is necessary for fostering a positive climate between governmental organizations and the public.

3. Relationships. The development of relationships is crucial to the work of the Institute. Both those who serve as instructors and those who are the recipients of the Institute's services will be treated as valued partners in the endeavors of the Institute. Credibility resulting from those relationships will create leverage for the Institute in the marketplace.

4. Strategy driven. Strategic decision making is paramount in an area as needy as this region of the world. The vast majority of the businesses, especially in the Katerini area, that will seek training are small. Many are family owned and operated and have only a few employees. Such businesses have certain unique characteristics. For instance, in the human resources arena, management is in the hands of family members and relational issues often center around the personalities and not the goals of the business. Dealing with a difficult management issue when it affects a brother or a son is hard in any part of the world, but it is especially so in the Balkan region where family ties are strong. This does not negate the need for strategic planning; it only suggests that small businesses deal with additional obstacles. Leslie Rue, the Carl R. Zwerner Chair of Family-Owned Enterprises at Georgia State University, and Nabil Ibrahim, the Grover C. Maxwell Chair of Business Administration at Augusta State University in Georgia, point out that in the small business sector "although those with a sophisticated planning process report higher rates of growth in sales, it is also possible that these revenues are not

bringing about higher profits because of internal inefficiencies and capital constraints. This would be consistent with previous research that found small firms to be lacking in the specialized managerial and financial resources needed to acquire information in accurate, timely, or efficient manner.”⁶

5. Team approach. Dennis Bakke, the former CEO of a large corporation in the United States, says “building good teams depends on hiring the right kind of people.... Skills and talent were important, but they took a back seat to the way a person reacted to the company’s values, including our definition of fun.”⁷ The task is two-fold: First, as the work of the Institute expands, the right people must be selected as members of the Institute staff, thus freeing existing leadership to focus on new endeavors. Second, conscious focus must be placed on building a multi-ethnic staff. For example, in addition to Greeks and Americans, including people from other Balkan states will help to sensitize the team to the complexity of the region and model a vibrant community of international believers. From December 2003 to December 2006, the team consisted of a Greek American couple. In December 2006, an American couple joined the team. Future plans call for adding multi-ethnic team members.

Launching the Institute

Incorporating the Institute as a legal entity under the regulations of the Greek government was the necessary first step in launching the organization. Creating

⁶Leslie W. Rue, and Nabil A. Ibrahim, "The Relationship between Planning Sophistication and Performance in Small Businesses," *Journal of Small Business Management* 36, no. 4 (1998), <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001415369>.

⁷ Dennis Bakke, *Joy at Work: A Revolutionary Approach to the Fun on the Job* (Seattle, WA: PVG, 2005), 95.

awareness in the community of the existence of the Institute and its capacity to serve the business community was a necessary second step.

Legal Issues

The legal process began with the incorporation of the Institute as a legal tax exempt entity recognized as such by the Greek Internal Revenue Service in 2004. As such, it can function with subsidiaries in Greece, throughout the European Union, and beyond.

Business Connections

The first introduction to the Katerini business community came through the local Chamber of Commerce in the province of Pieria, of which Katerini is the capital. The Chamber represents more than 8,000 businesses, most of which are small to medium in size. When the director of the Institute approached the provincial director of the Center of Business and Technological Development of Central Macedonia (KETA-KEMAK), he immediately expressed interest in finding ways to work with the Institute. KETA-KEMAK is “an urban non-profit organization that has been established to aid business activity in the region of Central Macedonia...”⁸ and has been selected by the Ministry of Development for the “growth of structural supportive network for small and medium enterprises. It is financed by the European Union and the Greek State”⁹ and functions under the umbrella of local provincial chambers of commerce. KETA-KEMAK’s

⁸ “Company Profile,” *K.E.T.A.-K.E.MAK*, < <http://www.keta-kemak.gr/en/index.html> >, December 3, 2005.

⁹ Ibid.

director, Mr. Nikos, introduced the Institute director to the president of the Chamber in Katerini and he agreed to co-sponsor a seminar.

At the same time, at the request of the editor of the bimonthly magazine of the Chamber, the Institute director wrote two articles for the magazine. One focused on the impact of the twenty-first century on business and the second focused on the worth of the individual and the need to hire people in business who are capable and who are open to being evaluated.

The second major introduction to the local community was an interview with the director on a prime-time local television talk show. The live one-and-one-half hour interview focused on the global economy and the need for fundamental changes in thinking about how the local society views the rest of the world. The discussion centered on the need for a change in thinking, the idea of interdependence, and the perspective of looking at the future with a sense of being a part of a global community rather than moving towards isolationism and nationalistic attitudes. Changes needed in the educational system such as moving from teaching students what to think to teaching them how to think were discussed. The director included a biblical reference to the Apostle Paul's challenge in the book of Philippians to think of those things that are good. "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."¹⁰

Other opportunities to introduce the Institute to the community came as the director participated in several social events sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce in order to meet some of the leaders of the community and keep them

¹⁰ Phil 4:8

informed about events sponsored by the Institute. The Institute also became an official member of the Greek American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) and its northern Greece office in Thessaloniki. In AMCHAM's materials, the Institute is listed with institutions that offer business educational training. According to the northern Greece coordinator of AMCHAM, of the 1,100 companies in Greece that do business with America, 250 are in northern Greece. It is in the Institute's interest to utilize this relationship to further connect with American businesses and be a catalyst for those that might be interested in investing in the region.

Conducting the Pilot Projects

Two types of pilot projects were conducted in 2005 and 2006: (1) two-hour conferences in varying locations; (2) five-day seminars. This thesis-project focuses on the two-hour conferences that were offered in November 2006, and on the first of the five-day seminars that was conducted in May 2005.

Two-hour conferences

Two two-hour conferences open to a general audience were offered during a one-week period in November 2006. The conferences were led by Mr. Lewis, an international business consultant from the United States. The director of the Institute had recruited Mr. Lewis when he was in Katerini for one night in October 2005 to make a presentation to the Pieria Chamber of Commerce. In November 2006, at the invitation of the Institute and the Chamber of Commerce, he returned for a week. That week, he gave a presentation in Katerini on "Building a Successful Company" and also gave a presentation in Thessaloniki on "Characteristics of a Dynamic Organization" in

cooperation with the Institute and AMCHAM. The purpose of his trip not only was to make the presentations but also to help the Institute gain leverage with AMCHAM and the Pieria Chamber of Commerce in Katerini and to see what other opportunities would present themselves.

His first seminar on Monday with AMCHAM was held at the U.S. Consulate in Thessaloniki. Leaders from businesses who were members of AMCHAM were invited to the lecture/discussion which was given in English accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. More than 20 people attended. Mr. Lewis made clear during and after his presentation that any follow-up consultations as well as future meetings were to be handled through the Institute. At the end of the presentation, several people met with Mr. Lewis and indicated they wished further contacts with the Institute. Among those present were leaders of three subsidiaries of multinational companies, three private institutions of higher learning, and two shipping companies.

On Wednesday evening, Mr. Lewis led a seminar with the Chamber of Commerce of Katerini, which Mr. Nikos from the KETA-KEMAK office had arranged to be translated simultaneously; the PowerPoint material was in Greek as well. The event had been advertised in the local newspaper and on radio several days earlier. One hundred twenty five people filled the conference hall to capacity with standing room only; not enough transistor radios were available to use for the translation. The chamber staff also had arranged an interview that took place just prior to the meeting with radio, newspaper, and television reporters for Mr. Lewis and the newly elected chamber president. That set the stage for the president to announce some of the upcoming innovative seminars and training. Mr. Lewis spoke for an hour and a half, with a break. His method was dialogue

with the audience. Through his stories, he shared part of his spiritual pilgrimage and how it had affected him.

One five-day seminar

The five-day seminar was open to a limited number of participants. The director of the Institute chose curriculum called “Successful Business Principles” developed and distributed by HighMark, Inc., the developers of training materials used by teams of experienced American business executives. The curriculum consists of a cycle of four seminars dealing with marketing, financial management, human resources, and business strategy. Each seminar is five days in duration, four hours per day. Each student uses a workbook composed of five modules. Five PowerPoint presentations are included as well.

During a typical seminar week, classes are conducted in the evenings. During the day, instructors visit each participant to become acquainted with his/her business and offer consultation. Follow-up is done via e-mail, if necessary. After the seminar is concluded and the instructors have left, a series of five meetings over the next five weeks are held with those who attended the seminars. In each meeting, a facilitator guides a discussion around questions taken from the five modules. Participants are expected to share ideas from their respective businesses. These meetings are designed to make the most of a comfortable environment in which to reinforce the seminar content as well as provide an opportunity for the local businesspeople to network. It furthers bonding between people who work in the same town but who may not know each other. It also allows the local facilitator to get to know the people better so that he/she can provide future counsel as needed. For the follow-up to the seminar that is the focus of this thesis-

project, the Institute director acted as the facilitator. He also had arranged for the workbook and PowerPoint presentations to be translated into Greek prior to the seminar (For a sample module on marketing, see appendix 3).

The Institute's pilot seminar focused on marketing. It was led by two instructors from North Carolina whom the director of the Institute had recruited through an American friend in Greece. The friend's father was one of the two instructors, who, in turn, recruited instructors for the next three seminars and returned to Greece for those seminars as well. The high caliber of the instructors was immediately obvious. One was a former vice president of Coca Cola; the other, a former executive with Texaco. Each had moved on to other types of businesses, but their experience was vast and they were certainly overqualified to help the smaller businesses and companies they had come to assist.

The expectation was that the Chamber of Commerce would enlist 10 participants for the seminar, but after a concerted effort by both the Institute and the Chamber, only four participated. The class was scheduled in the morning with visits to participating businesses in the afternoon. The fee for participating was set at 200 Euros, low enough to be affordable but high enough to reflect the expectation of recognizing the value of the seminar.

After the last session, the Institute hosted a dinner for the participants and their spouses at which time the instructors presented them with books related to marketing. A year later, the participants still were talking about what was to them a new way of training: instructors who "served" them and not vice versa.

Summary

The design and implementation of the thesis-project provided the opportunity for the Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development to be introduced to a broad spectrum of people in northern Greece. These included leaders of education, business, government, and media. Business seminars sponsored by the Institute opened the door for networking between Greek and American business leaders.

Expectations for the project were met. Groundwork was laid for the future growth and development of the Institute. Commitments to ongoing partnerships between the Institute and local business entities were established.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES OF THE THESIS-PROJECT

In chapter one, three major projected outcomes of this thesis-project were identified. They are: (1) To evaluate the impact on committed Christian businesspeople and on the larger Katerini business community of the Institute's business education projects designed to raise awareness of the need to follow biblical principles in business; (2) to enlist businesspeople in life-long learning and to involve them in on-going discussion groups that will focus on applying biblical values, both personally and corporately, in the marketplace; and (3) to foster a change in attitude about business dealings in the Greek business community, such as improvement in the quality of products and service.

This chapter will focus on evaluating the results of the thesis-project in light of these projected major outcomes. Recommendations for the future work of the Institute will be made as well.

Outcomes

Three major outcomes were projected for the thesis-project. These served as guides throughout the project.

Outcome 1

One of the best indicators of how the level of awareness of the need to follow biblical principles in business has been raised came as a result of the week-long seminars in 2005 (For a detailed look at these seminars, see chapter 4. For an example of the content of a seminar, see appendix 3).

When word spread that the two Americans who were to teach the seminars had worked for world-renowned companies, Olympio Vema (OV), the newspaper with the largest circulation in the province, wanted to interview them. The result was front-page coverage on two consecutive days. The interview with Mr. C., a former executive with Texaco, along with his photo and the headline “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” ran on the first day. The following is a portion of that interview:

OV: As a consultant of businesses what do you see as the best advice to businessmen of our city? Mr. C.: As Jesus said: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. OV: What is the biggest lesson that your professional life gave you? Mr. C.: Treatment of people courteously, an ethical relationship with the customer and the whole business cycle of individuals to be treated above suspicion, with emphasis on the interest of the customer, best quality of product and in the best price. These ingredients are not utopia, but daily there are examples of success in both small and large companies.”¹

The second interview with “Mr. R” was featured on the following day. This is a portion:

OV: Nothing is accidental. To what do you contribute your success in the business world? Mr. R: I believe that God gave me all I have and I am accountable to Him. So, I work hard at applying those principles that will make me a good and faithful steward of all I have. I taught my children to choose something that they are gifted at, to work hard at it and give it their all in order to enjoy what they do. OV: In your long professional life you had things happen and you learned a lot. What is the most significant lesson, or one of the most significant lessons that life gave you? Mr. R: On the one hand I learned that money DOES NOT buy happiness. On the other hand, I started from nothing--I had no two coins to rub together as a young man--and I learned that when you

¹ Wayne C., interview in *Olympio Vema*, June 6, 2005, 2.

find a business that is creative and you enjoy it and you work hard, with commitment and responsibility in order to achieve your idea, you can succeed.”²

The quote under his photo read: “I believe that God gave me all I have and I am accountable to Him.”

Awareness of the need for incorporating Christian values into the marketplace also was accomplished through the efforts of Mr. Lewis in the two-hour seminars he led in Thessaloniki and in Katerini in November 2006 (See chapter 4 for details of these seminars.) At the end of his presentation, many people asked to meet with him privately not just to discuss business but also some of their personal fears and doubts. For the next several days people called the Institute to talk about how much they had been encouraged by hearing something positive that “lifted their spirits.” Many asked if other events were planned and if Mr. Lewis would be returning. As a result, several opportunities opened up for the Institute director to enter into discussions with businesspeople concerning values and the source of values. This led to further contacts for dialogue on the spiritual origin of values.

During Mr. Lewis’ week in Greece, several unscheduled opportunities opened that also helped to raise the awareness of the need for biblical principles in the marketplace. On Sunday night he led a discussion for a group of young believer businessmen and a seeker who had joined the group in Katerini. Mr. Lewis shared his faith story and challenged them to become what God wants them to be in the marketplace. On Tuesday, he was the keynote speaker at the opening of a new department at a university in Katerini. He spoke about ethics in general. On Wednesday, a dean of the university at which Mr. Lewis had spoken on Tuesday invited him to visit

² George R, interview in *Olympio Vema*, June 7, 2005, 2.

him at the main campus in Thessaloniki. The dean introduced him to two other deans who indicated they may use him for a possible series of lectures when Mr. Lewis returns to Greece in 2007. On Thursday, when he and the director of the Institute were interviewed on television about business issues and the state of the global economy, Mr. Lewis talked about the need for ethical standards in order for man to survive. On Friday, he was interviewed by a priest who is editor of a community newspaper that is owned by a non-profit organization that serves the native poor as well as immigrants who have come to Greece to seek employment. Mr. Lewis talked about being a consultant and how the spiritual side of his life relates to his job.

In evaluating the week, Mr. Lewis said:

My time...was a great experience.... The week gave me an opportunity to see (up close), a very effective work. The engagement of the business community in Greece... During my time we engaged literally thousands of people. Thru [sic] a meeting at the U.S. Consul General's office with business leaders in Thessaloniki, speeches at Universities, a business management forum, newspaper interviews and TV appearances in a kind of "Face the Nation" forum that was broadcast twice through the region at the local TV station.... Unlike many well meaning M[ission] trips that are often done FOR westerners, this was not a "vacation with a purpose", but rather a well thought out and effectively executed week which included hard work and strategic appointments with key influential business leaders...a great strategy to reach people for the Jesus we know.³

Equally important in raising the awareness of the need for applying biblical principles in business was the servant spirit exemplified by the instructors in the pilot projects. During the week-long seminars, the American instructors developed a great rapport with their students by showing a special interest in each person's business. The fact that they catered to the needs of the students, in spite of being executives in major conglomerates, was a Christian witness in itself. In Greece, this is unusual and the local

³ From Mr. Lewis' written evaluation of the November 2006 meetings

businesspeople initially had a hard time dealing with it, but eventually they came to understand and appreciate this attitude. In the Greek culture, the teacher retains a distance from the students, and the expert does not develop informal relationships with those he /she is helping. Especially is that true if the instructor is associated with a huge global multinational corporation. Executives in similar corporations in Greece simply would not associate with or teach businesspeople who come from small companies or businesses.

Outcome 2

An important focus of the thesis-project was the effort to challenge businesspeople to a commitment to life-long learning. The fulfillment of this desired outcome is reflected in the following results:

1. A Bible study group composed of young businessmen in Katerini who are believers has begun. The plan is to develop an interdenominational fellowship through the network of Christian European businessmen called Europartners. This network provides discussion material relevant to the marketplace for use by the discussion groups (For a sample lesson, see appendix 5).

2. Plans are underway to help the Chamber of Commerce of Pieria establish a business library. Materials relating to biblical ethics written by American as well as Greek authors regardless of Christian background will be included.

3. In summer 2006, a graduate student (who is a believer) from the Patterson School of Diplomacy at the University of Kentucky served as an intern with the Institute. In the future, more students will be recruited for such assignments.

4. The leaders of the business seminars in the thesis-project continue via e-mail and other forms of communication to mentor Greek businesspeople who were their

seminar students. This affords many opportunities to deal with the intersection of business and Christian values.

Outcome 3

Changes in attitude are difficult to measure. Especially is this true given the limitations of the two-year time frame of this thesis-project. As stated in chapter 1, measurable results will require much longer than the time limitations imposed by this thesis-project.

Some initial seedlings of change can be observed, however:

1. As a result of the positive experience with the two-hour seminar in Thessaloniki, which was described as “excellent” by the participants, the U.S. Consul is open to working with the Institute and AMCHAM to offer seminars in Thessaloniki. The AMCHAM bimonthly magazine “Business Partners” made mention of the Thessaloniki seminar in their November-December 2006 issue, noting that it was sponsored by AMCHAM and the Institute and was supported by the U.S. Consulate General. Mr. Lewis was called the “highly-experienced executive coach and mentor.”⁴ The support of such recognized bodies as AMCHAM is crucial to a change in attitude. Some companies in Thessaloniki have indicated an interest in inviting Mr. Lewis to serve as a consultant.

2. An AMCHAM official has asked the Institute to offer the “Successful Business Principles” series of seminars in Thessaloniki.

3. The Katerini Chamber of Commerce has asked the Institute to offer four week-long seminars for businesses and as many two-hour seminar presentations as can be scheduled each year.

⁴ “Thessaloniki Event,” *Business Partners* V, no. 27: 7, http://www.amcham.gr/client_files/BUSINESS_PARTNERS_27.pdf Nov-Dec 2006.

4. The Katerini Chamber of Commerce has asked the Institute to offer business English classes to local businesspeople.

5. The Katerini Chamber of Commerce has designated the Institute as one of its official training entities.

6. At least one business owner who participated in the week-long pilot seminar has upgraded his full service gasoline station/auto parts store and improved services for his customers. He also has developed a new advertising strategy that emphasizes the importance of being truthful with his customers. He has since been elected president of the province's association of gasoline station owners.

Recommendations

Recommendations resulting from this thesis-project are:

1. While participants in the week-long pilot seminars found the curriculum relevant and the sessions practical, some did struggle with the fact that the "Successful Business Principles" curriculum is designed for medium to large companies rather than for small businesses such as theirs. The instructors need intentionally to adapt their presentations to small businesses.

2. The week-long seminars should be offered in the evenings in order to accommodate the needs of small business owners who cannot leave their businesses unattended during daytime business hours. In point of fact, the three week-long seminars that followed the pilot seminar were offered in the evenings.

3. While the Institute will continue to offer "Successful Business Principles" seminars in Katerini, the main focus will shift to Thessaloniki and its larger companies which can benefit more from the curriculum.

4. Further research should be conducted concerning curriculum that focuses on small to medium sized businesses.
5. Further research should be conducted regarding the role of NGOs in the Greek environment.
6. Develop plans to offer business seminars in other Balkan countries in addition to Greece.

APPENDIX 1

INTERBALKAN INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and VALUES

Vision Statement

The institute is an effort to bring support and resources for the development of a more stable region in southeastern Europe in ways that create and strengthen peace building networks.

Mission Statement

The institute will assist in creating educational, economic, reconciliatory, and cultural forums and networks to positively affect the standard of living in a holistic way the Balkan region.

Goal A

Develop the educational component of the Institute.

Objective 1

Provide courses that are transferable to bachelor's degree programs of institutions in Europe and North America.

Plans: Develop working relationships with existing private academic institutions in Greece and the rest of the Balkans.

Objective 2

Formulate a college program in fields relevant to emerging market needs in the region.

Objective 3

Organize seminars that are relevant to existing academic programs of the Institute in order to meet the needs of those just interested in professional development and a better competitive edge.

Objective 4

Promote through academic institutions programs of cultural exchange for the promotion of cross-cultural communication.

Objective 5

Develop athletic events and training opportunities through academic institutions for genuine competition and pursuit of excellence in the field of sports.

Goal B

Develop the economic component of the Institute.

Objective 1

Assist in the establishment of a network of business leaders between USA, Greece and other Balkan states for the purpose of mutual learning and exchange of ideas in their related fields.

Objective 2

Help businesses establish connections internationally with imports and exports between the USA, Greece and other Balkan countries.

Objective 3

Be a catalyst for economic seminars for the improvement of businesses and for the establishment of standards of excellence.

Goal C

Develop an electronic commerce site.

Goal D

Encourage the establishment of reconciliation networks for the Balkans.

Objective 1

Locate existing international networks of reconciliation relating to the Balkans.

Objective 2

Assist in creating new reconciliation networks that are faith-based and can deal with understanding of the religious landscape of the Balkan region.

Values**Focus on Purpose**

The purpose of the II is to be a catalyst for educational and economic development by bringing together appropriate needs and resources

Integrity

To interact with honesty and transparency so that we can earn the trust of those we serve

Relationships

All tasks depend on building relationships for excellent communication

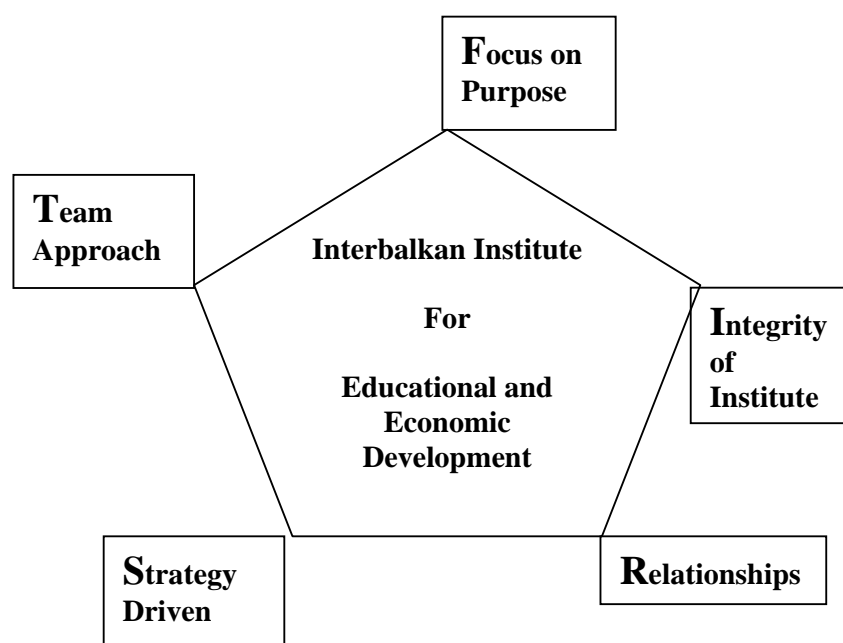
Strategy Driven

Strategic decision making is paramount for prioritizing, planning, executing, and evaluating the effectiveness of the II

Team Approach

Each team member's giftedness is crucial, unique, and necessary contributor to the shaping and fulfillment of the vision

APPENDIX 2

**INTERBALKAN INSTITUTE FOR
EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT*****FIRST
PRIORITIES***

Hope For The Balkans One Person At A Time

APPENDIX 3

**HIGHMARK, INCORPORATED
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS PRINCIPLES*****“Successful Marketing Principles” Seminar*****“Adapting a Marketing Orientation”**

by

W. Wayne Talarzyk, Ph.D.

Much of the material in this Seminar has been adapted from
Kotler on Marketing: how to create, win and dominate markets,
By Philip Kotler, The Free Press, 1999

This Workbook Issued to:

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Dr. Talarzyk earned a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from Purdue University and worked as a flight test engineer with the Atlas missile system at General Dynamics Corporation. He later returned to Purdue and received his Master's Degree and Ph. D. in industrial administration. While there he also served as an instructor in marketing management and financial management. Upon graduation he joined the marketing faculty at Ohio State. In addition to his teaching and research activities, he has served as Chairman of the marketing faculty and was the first chair of the undergraduate programs in the Fisher College of Business. He has received outstanding teaching and service awards from both Purdue University and Ohio State.

Dr. Talarzyk serves as a consultant in the areas of strategic planning, marketing, and retailing strategies. He is a frequent participant in executive seminars, continuing education programs. He is author or co-author of fifteen college textbooks, three research monographs, and three professional manuals.

SEMINAR INSTRUCTORS

Insert Instructor photos and biographical information on this page.

Module 1

Developing a Philosophy of Marketing

Objectives for and Overview of Module 1

Marketing Definitions

1. Your definition of “marketing”

2. Initial thoughts about “marketing”

a.

b.

3. Basic definition of marketing:

“Find a need, and fill it.”

4. Elaborated definition:

“Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.”

Three Types of Marketing

1. Adaptive or Responsive: a clear need exists

2. Anticipative: emerging need

3. Formative or Need-Shaping

Discussion Questions: (1) what *Type* of marketing is primarily done in your company? For the three largest selling products or services in your company, state which type(s) of marketing you perform. (2) What types of marketing might be more appropriate in the future? (3) What would you do to cause this change in type of marketing?

PRODUCT/SERVICE

TYPE OF MARKETING

Present

Future

How to

Change

1.

2.

3.

Ways of Serving Markets

1. Mass Marketing

- a. Push strategy
- b. Pull strategy

2. Target Marketing

- a. Segments
- b. Niches
- c. Market cells

3. Customer-level Marketing

- a. Customized marketing
- b. Mass customization marketing

Discussion Question: Who do you say is your customer? How narrowly have you defined the customer for your products? List specific segments, niches, or cells to which you primarily market your products or services:

**PRODUCT/SERVICE
DESCRIPTION**

SEGMENT

1.

2.

3.

Changing Eras of Emphasis

1. Manufacturing

- a. Focus –
- b. Philosophy –
- c. Means –
- d. Ends –

2. Sales

- a. Focus –
- b. Philosophy –
- c. Means –
- d. Ends –

3. Marketing

- a. Focus –
- b. Philosophy –
- c. Means –
- d. Ends –

Discussion Questions: (1) In which era are most companies in your country today, and what changes are taking place? (2) In which era is your company operating now? (3) What initial steps must be taken to change toward the “marketing” era in your company?

Marketing Myopia

- 1. Explanation of “marketing myopia”**

- 2. What is our real business?**

- 3. Production verses marketing orientation**
 - a. Production orientation – real business explained in terms of physical characteristics of the product**

 - b. Marketing orientation – real business explained in terms of benefits received by consumers**

Discussion Questions: (1) How has this section of the seminar affected your thinking about your business? (2) Before you studied “marketing myopia”, what was your business orientation? (3) Now what business would you say you were in, and what changes in your business must be taken because of this different perspective?

Summary and Conclusions for Module 1

APPENDIX 4**HighMark, Inc.**
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS PRINCIPLES (SBP)**Seminar Evaluation Form**

To be completed by Participants and returned to Team Leader at the close of the each Seminar

1. What parts of this Seminar were most helpful for you? Why?

2. What parts of the Seminar could have been more helpful? How?

3. What suggestions do you have to make this next Seminar more effective for you?

4. If in your opinion any of the following should be improved in the future, please tell us how:

Daily Schedule

Interpretation

Workbook Materials

Meeting Facility

APPENDIX 5

Honesty, Dependability, Putting Others First*

Bible Study Guide

Bible Reading: Proverbs 11:1-6; Philippians 2:3-4

CHALLENGE:

In a world where “whatever it takes to make a sale” is often the operative motto, qualities such as honesty, dependability and putting others first sometimes seem as rare as a solar eclipse. Yet it is these characteristics that can set apart Christians in business from their non-believing associates. Is it so difficult to be honest and dependable, or does it just come naturally for followers of Christ?

RESPONSE: *(Ask questions and discuss answers)*

1. Proverbs 11:1-6 presents a strong contrast between good and evil. What do these passages about honesty, integrity and righteousness say to you? What are the results and consequences of these contrasting behaviors?

- Is there a difference between trying to live righteously in the home and in the workplace? Why or why not?

2. Are there times when it seems particularly difficult to be honest in business dealings? How do you handle temptations to color the truth or be dishonest?

- What are some other challenges to being consistently dependable on the job?

3. Consider Philippians 2:3-4. Is it possible for a business person to be ambitious without being selfish? Do these verses even apply to a business setting? Explain what you mean—and give an example, if you can.

4. What are the possible ramifications for a Christian who seeks to carry out these ideals in every business transaction?

- By comparison, what are the ramifications of professing to be a Christian while being dishonest, not dependable, or unwilling to put others first?

APPLICATION:

Reflect on the business dealings you have observed over the past week. Were they conducted with complete honesty? If you were to evaluate your own professional behavior based on the past week alone, how would you rate yourself in terms of honesty and dependability? What about putting others first on the job--is this a characteristic you think people would associate with you?

If your answers were not what they should have been, don't be discouraged--all of us, as Romans 3:23 reminds us, "fall short of the glory of God." The only way to correct behavior that fails to meet the Lord's holy standards is by His grace and through His power. Pray about your work, confess your failures, then ask God to enable you to respond with integrity in your business dealings.

Accountability to another believer or small group of believers can help us to carry out our commitment to become more faithful in obeying the Lord. If you feel comfortable in doing so, confide to another person your struggles with integrity in business--or other challenges you are facing. Ask them to pray with you, and periodically to offer encouragement by asking about your progress.

SUMMARY:

Next time: For many years, members of CBMC have been referred to as "men who show the way." Being a witness for Christ is often a show-and-tell process. We will discuss how fairness, patience, consistency and righteous living can affect our impact as followers of the Lord.

APPENDIX 6

EXAMPLES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

In preparation for forming the Interbalkan Institute for Educational and Economic Development, the researcher studied the purpose, structure, methodology, and impact of four non-governmental organizations. He specifically examined how one of the four used the systemic approach for its organization and he focused on business education training and the spiritual impact in their communities of the other three.

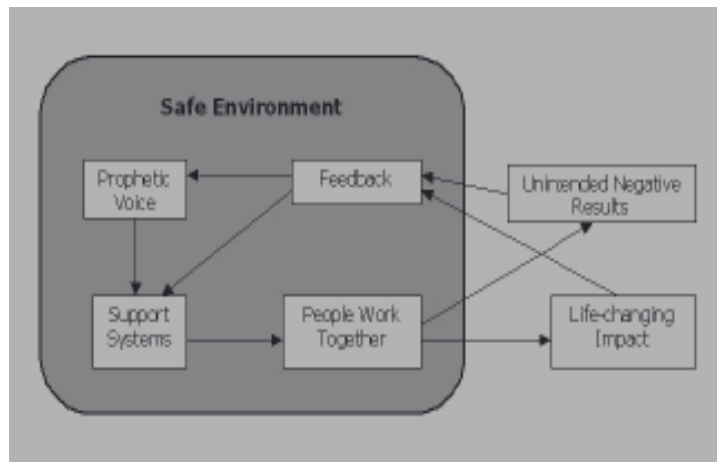
CityServe

CityServe of Boston, Massachusetts, grew out of a need in the community “for someone to bring Christians together and guide them through partnerships and volunteer opportunities”¹ as part of Emmanuel Gospel Center (EGC), an urban ministry based in Boston that works “to build and multiply urban churches and urban ministries. EGC provides resources to nurture urban churches and urban ministries and to encourage ministry in urban and ethnic communities.”² The person who was hired to be the director of CityServe committed much research time to interviewing church leaders both in the urban and in the suburban church community with whom EGC already related. Interviewees ranged from directors of other NGOs to pastors and laity. The goal was to hear their ideas on cooperation and on the use of volunteers. The CityServe director then gathered together individuals from similar organizations and asked them this question: “What is needed for diverse churches to work together effectively?” The responses

¹ Steve Darman, “How EGC Grows a Program to Serve Churches,” *EGC Inside* 12, no.3 (May-June 2005).

² Mission statement, home page of the website of Emmanuel Gospel Center: <http://www.egc.org/>.

clustered around three things as the “motivating forces behind the creation of partnerships: (1) a prophetic voice which speaks the truth and energizes people to action; (2) support systems, which could be guidelines for developing and sustaining partnerships or a mechanism for matching resources and needs; and (3) a safe environment, where no participant feels threatened or misused.”³ The design process of CityServe used a systemic approach with the three elements interrelated.



Within a safe operating environment, “A *prophetic voice* energizes people to action around a certain cause or need; *support systems* enable people to organize and make progress, so that *people work together*. As a result of their actions, there are both positive, ideally *life-changing impacts* on all those involved, as well as *unintended negative results*. *Feedback* from both types of results is communicated in a safe environment to the prophetic voice and support systems, to enable the partnership to continually improve and develop.”⁴

³ Darman, 3.

⁴ Ibid.

After the initial design process was completed, CityServe applied the model in several partnerships, one of which was a non-profit accountant service for the social outreach program of a young congregation in Boston.

*The Trading Company*⁵

Bill and Page Mallory started an international trading business and after seventeen years opened a manufacturing plant in the Philippines to supply their company with goods. Their efforts provided income opportunities for low-income Filipinos while maintaining the dignity of the indigenous people.

Prior to starting his own company, Bill had been a vice president in another organization that sold imported products. When he started his company, he set up internationally offices, including one in the Philippines. Sensing the leading of the Holy Spirit, he and Page initially moved to the Philippines for six months, but that time became seven years as they felt the need to work more closely with their employees in operations outside the United States. They saw that the workers were paid fairly and received all the benefits they earned. They tackled the problem of absenteeism that was a result of poor health by providing vitamins and at times paying for health emergencies for their employees. The company grew from 40 employees working in a 30,000-square-foot plant in 1997 to 450 employees and a 220,000-square-foot plant in 2004. Over the years, with Bill's encouragement, some employees have left the business to begin their own businesses that now supply Bill's plant with materials. In this manner, the community income base continues to expand and the income level of more people is rising.

⁵ McFarlane, Scott and Kent W. Siebert. "For the Love of Business: Demonstrating the Love of God Through the Practice of Business." Paper submitted to the 20th Annual Christian Business Faculty Association Conference "Just Business: Christian Perspectives on Marketplace Justice." (October 28-30, 2004): 8-12.

A Bible study attended by 100 employees at the plant will soon become a new church plant.

Two NGOs Operating in Zimbabwe

Erica Bornstein from the University of California, Berkley, has examined the work of World Vision and Christian Care in Zimbabwe in terms of the issue of developing faith. He concluded that both NGOs:

share a great deal in terms of Christian, humanitarian philosophy and overall objectives, such as the eradication of rural poverty, they have different histories and Christian orientations. World Vision is a transnational, evangelical, NGO that operates in 95 countries, including Zimbabwe....Christian Care, in contrast, is the development arm of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). Linked to the global ecumenical body, the World Council of Churches, it begun its work in Zimbabwe assisting political detainees during the liberation war. Christian Care and World Vision both work in collaboration with local churches and with the Zimbabwean state. Christian faith is presented in a different hue in each organizational mission.⁶

Both organizations, one with international activity and the other with both a national activity and international networking, focus on combining holistic ministry and lifestyle evangelism. They view the world in two parts: “the evangelized/developed and the unevangelized/underdeveloped. It was through acts of development that the world could be reached, touched, and transformed.”⁷

For both NGOs, “economic development presumes a religious calling to serve the poor (Yamamori et al. 1996). Justice and morality offer an ontological connection between religious doctrine and vernacular practice....Economic development serves a

⁶ Erica Bornstein, “Developing Faith: Theologies of Economic Development in Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32, no. 1, 6.

⁷ Ibid., 7.

dual purpose: to introduce Christian beliefs to individuals, and to ‘redeem’ the earth to its ‘God-given potential’”⁸

In the case of World Vision, evangelism efforts were undertaken by their employees and members of local churches. Christian Care, on the other hand, by and large left evangelism to the local churches that partnered with the organization. But for both NGOs, “there was the practical aspect to conflating Christianity with development.”⁹ In other words, economic progress was safeguarded against use for purposes that were counterproductive to a Christian lifestyle, such as using profits to buy alcoholic beverages and getting drunk. Also the goal was to train Christian leaders. This became a trademark for the benefits the community accrued as the Christian principles minimized cheating and vandalizing.

The NGOs, however, were not without problems. The usual challenges associated with developing a new program included not having adequate resources and the ever-present lack of enough leaders to sustain the work.

For both NGOs, faith was the final evaluating tool. “Christian employees evaluated the work of the NGO--and other employees within the institution--in terms of their own faith: judging, measuring, accepting, and sometimes rejecting the actions and imperatives of the NGO.”¹⁰

The underlying principle in both World Vision and Christian Care as Christian development organizations is the constant integration of economic and spiritual elements and resources and their application in the communities served. A second important

⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

⁹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰ Ibid., 22.

principle is helping raise leaders who will facilitate sustaining progress in both the economic and spiritual components.

Applied faith--that is faith that issues in changes in the community--along with networking with Kingdom constituents helps create leverage for the gospel to be heard in multiple ways in a community.

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